

# SBR Draft

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

Historic Name: W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District  
Other name/site number: Williams-Koen-McManis Company  
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

### 2. Location

Street & number: District is bound roughly by Commerce, Sampson, Preston, and Velasco Streets  
City or town: Houston State: Texas County: Harris  
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

\_\_\_\_\_  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Signature of certifying official / Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Texas Historical Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

### Category of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
15	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
15	1	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** COMMERCE/office, INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility, warehouse

**Current Functions:** COMMERCE/office, INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility, VACANT

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** NO STYLE

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Concrete, glass, limestone, stucco

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-# through 7-#)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b>	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** N/A

**Areas of Significance:** COMMERCE, INDUSTRY

**Period of Significance:** c.1925-1957

**Significant Dates:** 1949, 1954

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): N/A

**Architect/Builder:** Brown Construction (Builder); architect is unknown.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-# through 8-#)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 9-# through 9-#)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): N/A

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** 7.07 acres

### Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (use decimal degree format)

Latitude 29°45'2.40N Longitude 95°20'26.91W

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The district is bounded by Commerce Street on the north, Sampson Street on the east, Preston Street on the south, and Velasco Street on the west. The boundaries encompass Lots 1-3, 11 & 12, Block 553, Engelke Addition, South Side Buffalo Bayou; Lots 6-12, Block 544, Ranger Addition, South Side Buffalo Bayou; Lots 1-5, 11 & 12, Block 554, Engelke Addition, South Side Buffalo Bayou; Lots 6-10 & 12, Block 545; Lots 1-5, 11 & 12, Block 555, Engelke Addition, South Side Buffalo Bayou; and Lots 9-11, Block 546, Ranger Addition, South Side Buffalo Bayou.

**Boundary Justification:** The district boundary encompasses all extant properties historically associated with W-K-M Company, Inc. and closely follows the historic campus boundary.

## 11. Form Prepared By

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Date: September 2017

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheet Map-# through Map-#)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets Figure-# through Figure-#)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheet Photo-# through Photo-#)

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## Photographs

The following is the same for all photographs. Identified by WKM Company number:

City or Vicinity: Houston

County, State: Harris, TX

Photographer: SWCA Environmental Consultants

Name of Property: Overall view

Description of Photograph(s): Roberts Street, view north. Building #11 is located on the west (left), while the east (right) side of the street has Buildings #13, #14, #10, and #21 running from the foreground to the background. This stretch of Roberts marks the center of W-K-M's original industrial complex.

Date Photographed: September 2017

Photograph Number: 0001

Name of Property: Overall view

Description of Photograph(s): Sherman Street, view west from Roberts Street. Building #11 is on the south side of the street (left), and Non-Contributing Resource at 3217 Sherman and W-K-M Building #9 are both on the north (right) side of the street.

Date Photographed: September 2017

Photograph Number: 0002

Name of Property: Building #2-3-4(left) and Buildings #5 and #6 (right)

Description of Photograph(s): The south (rear) elevation of Buildings #2, #3, and #4 is featured on the left as a one story building. The south (rear) and east elevations of Buildings #5 and #6 are on the right with their second floors emerging along the centerlines. These buildings, with photo facing northwest, were used for offices, the machine shop, and assembly for the complex.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0003

Name of Property: Building #2-3-4

Description of Photograph(s): North (front) façade, view south of Buildings #2, #3, and #4. This photo demonstrates the typical alterations performed on buildings within the historic district: new window infill, new doors, and the covering or removal of original W-K-M signage.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0004

Name of Property: Building #2-3-4

Description of Photograph(s): East elevation of Building #2-3-4 under the connection to Buildings #5 and #6, view southwest.

Date Photographed: October 2017

Photograph Number: 0005

Name of Property: Building #6

Description of Photograph(s): Building #6, interior view southeast. The original metal framing and windows are still present.

Photograph Number: 0006

Name of Property: Building #9 and 3217 Sherman

Description of Photograph(s): Building #9 (left) and 3217 Sherman (right), south (front) and east elevations, view northwest.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0007

Name of Property: Building #9

Description of Photograph(s): Building #9, north (rear) and west elevations, view southeast.

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Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0008

Name of Property: Building #9

Description of Photograph(s): Building #9, interior view south.

Date Photographed: October 2017

Photograph Number: 0009

Name of Property: Building #10

Description of Photograph(s): Building #10, north and west elevations, view southeast with Building #13 in background on right and Building #16 partially visible at the left.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0010

Name of Property: Building #10

Description of Photograph(s): Detail of remaining W-K-M signage on the north elevation of Building #10, view southeast.

Date Photographed: September 2017

Photograph Number: 0011

Name of Property: Building #10

Description of Photograph(s): Building #10, view north.

Date Photographed: June 2017

Photograph Number: 0012

Name of Property: Building #16

Description of Photograph(s): – Building #16 interior, view south.

Date Photographed: October 2017

Photograph Number: 0013

Name of Property: Building #11

Description of Photograph(s): - Building #11, south (rear) and east elevations, view northwest.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0014

Name of Property: Building #11

Description of Photograph(s): - Building #11, interior view north from second floor.

Date Photographed: June 2017

Photograph Number: 0015

Name of Property: Building #13, #15, and #19

Description of Photograph(s): Building #13 (left), west (front) and south elevations, view northeast.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0016

Name of Property: Building #13

Description of Photograph(s): - Interior of Building #13, view east towards the first floor lobby.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0017

Name of Property: Building #13

Description of Photograph(s): - Interior of Building #13, second floor conference room, view south.

Date Photographed: February 2017

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Photograph Number: 0018

Name of Property: Buildings #13 and #14

Description of Photograph(s): - Covered space between Building #13 (left) and Building #14 (right), taken from inside Building #15, view west.

Date Photographed: October 2017

Photograph Number: 0019

Name of Property: Building #19

Description of Photograph(s): - Building #19, view south.

Date Photographed: October 2017

Photograph Number: 0020

Name of Property: Building #17

Description of Photograph(s): - Building #17, south (front) elevation, view north.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0021

Name of Property: Building #17

Description of Photograph(s): Building #17 interior view north.

Date Photographed: June 2017

Photograph Number: 0022

Name of Property: Building #18 and #20

Description of Photograph(s): - Building #18 north elevation (far left) and Building #20, north and west elevations, view southeast.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0023

Name of Property: Building #18

Description of Photograph(s): - Building #18 interior view north.

Date Photographed: June 2017

Photograph Number: 0024

Name of Property: Building #21

Description of Photograph(s): - North (rear) and west elevations, view southeast.

Date Photographed: February 2017

Photograph Number: 0025

Name of Property: Building #21

Description of Photograph(s): Building #21 interior, view northeast from second floor.

Date Photographed: June 2017

Photograph Number: 0026

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

## Narrative Description

The W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, roughly bounded by Commerce Street to the north, Sampson Street to the east, Preston Street to the south, and Velasco Street to the west, contains 16 buildings and is located approximately 1 mile east of the central business district of downtown Houston, Harris County, Texas. Houston is the largest city in the state and is the county seat. This district is comprised primarily of industrial commercial buildings built from the 1920s and 1940s reflecting the establishment and growth of the W-K-M Company. Roughly 25% of buildings in the district were constructed before WWII, and 75% were built between 1945 and 1960. Most of the buildings in the district retain their historic integrity, with covered or infilled windows and doors being the most common alteration over time. The W-K-M Company Historic District contains 15 contributing buildings and 1 non-contributing building.

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## Setting and Location

The W-K-M Company Historic District encompasses most of the parcels on six city blocks that made up the W-K-M Company complex from 1919 until 1957 when they relocated from this site, then outside of the Houston city limits. The district covers approximately 7 acres within Houston's Second Ward. It is located about 1 mile east of downtown Houston and less than 1 mile south of Buffalo Bayou. The district is roughly bounded by Commerce Street to the north, Sampson Street to the east, Preston Street to the south and Velasco Street to the west, although the blocks are not on a true north-south grid. Roberts Street runs northeast to southwest through the middle of the district. Commerce Street to the west-northwest is a thoroughfare into downtown and provides access to Interstate 69/US Highway 59, which serves as one of the major highways bounding downtown. Harrisburg Boulevard, one block southwest of the district, is another major thoroughfare from the district area to downtown after it becomes Texas Avenue. Within a 1 mile radius of the district is the Myers-Spalti Manufacturing Plant Historic District (NRHP 2003) and four individual National Register properties: Union Station (NRHP 1977), Annunciation Church (NRHP 1975), Arthur B. Cohn House (NRHP 1985), and Cheek Neal Coffee Company Building (NRHP 2016).

Most of the resources have primary elevations facing Sherman Street, Roberts Street, or Garrow Street. However, several of the buildings also have prominent secondary elevations facing Preston Street, Garrow Street, Sherman Street, and Commerce Street. Original lots within the district boundaries were platted for residential use. Lot sizes vary throughout the district with some of the current buildings covering multiple original lots while other buildings are on larger lots. Historically, there were rail road tracks running north-south in the blocks between Velasco and Roberts, as well as tracks running east-west on Commerce. The oldest buildings in the district appear to be located closest to the tracks. All of the tracks were removed, though the rail easement in the blocks is visible.

Buildings in the district are predominantly vernacular industrial buildings, with small setbacks for sidewalks or narrow parking areas. Most have a tripartite look, either as the shape of the building itself or with the use of parapet walls, providing continuity to the complex over multiple decades of growth. Buildings are mostly metal frame, some with stucco parapet walls. Common materials include metal casement windows, stucco exteriors, clerestory windows, corrugated wire glass, and painted brick. Building materials overall differ in the pre-war and post-war construction. The pre-war buildings are constructed of brick and stucco, while the post-war buildings are constructed primarily from concrete, steel, and glass. However, design continuity is visible through the inclusion of clerestory window lines and the metal casement windows, which appear on both pre- and post-war buildings. The architect(s) for these buildings are unknown; Brown Construction erected most of the buildings, particularly after World War II.

The topography in and around the district is relatively flat. Surrounding structures are a mix of early-twentieth-century single-family residential and modern infill of multi-family residential, commercial, and light industrial buildings.

Buildings in the W-K-M Company Historic District are in good condition. They retain a high level of integrity, and are a representative examples of early- to mid-twentieth-century industrial buildings. Sixteen of the remaining seventeen buildings contribute to the district. The oldest buildings date to circa 1925 and are mostly warehouse and manufacturing buildings. The last contributing buildings in the district were constructed in 1949. Approximately 25% of buildings in the district were constructed prior to World War II, and 75% were constructed in the post-war period. The most common alterations throughout the district are covered window openings and replacement overhead doors. All of the construction dates are taken from W-K-M's accounting records.

The most recent Sanborn map of the area, from 1924 with additions in 1951, covers two sheets. The company's accounting records indicate that in 1951, the W-K-M Company occupied 21 buildings over their six-block campus. The Sanborn maps number the buildings, making it easy to find the buildings and identify them using the company's original system. However, from the ordering on the Sanborn maps, it is clear that the company labeled their buildings based on chronological age and did not reorder as they demolished or combined buildings. None of the Sanborn maps identify Building #1 or Building #12. Building #1 likely referred to either the original 1919 warehouse or the house at 220 Roberts that served as the office. The warehouse, demolished circa 1925, was on the site of the combined Buildings #2, #3, & #4. The dwelling used as the first office was demolished for the construction of Building #11 in 1947. Building #12 was either enveloped or demolished prior to the most recent revisions to the Sanborn map. Originally located to the west of Building #11, Buildings #7 and #8 were demolished c. 1995. Sanborn maps label the buildings jointly as a materials warehouse, however the site of the buildings is now part of the parking area for Building #11. Buildings in the district do not retain a single owner anymore, and the majority are still in use as active light industrial manufacturing centers. Interior descriptions and photographs are available as access and safety allowed.

## District Resources

C= Contributing; NC = Non-contributing

### Office & Machine Shop (C)

#### Building #2-3-4

3210 A Garrow Street

ca. 1925, alteration ca. 1945

One-and-a-half- and two-story, commercial warehouse building with a corrugated metal gable roof with stucco parapet walls on both the Garrow and Preston Elevation. Outlines for "W - K - M CO. INC." are visible on the Preston elevation, although partially obscured by vegetation (Photos 3-4). The metal frame building is clad primarily with stucco and there is a concrete slab foundation. The structure has a long, raised wood-framed section along the gable peak with clerestory metal casement windows. There are no visible windows along the north or south elevations, though there is standing seam metal infill over window openings on the north elevation. There is one large bay door opening on the south elevation facing Preston with a roll-up metal garage door. The north elevation facing Garrow has one fixed window with a metal mesh screen. There is no access to the west elevation on the original rail easement, and there is only limited visibility. However, photos indicate that the original rail loading docks have been covered with standing-seam metal to show the original pattern of the openings. Metal infill on the east elevation connects Building #2-3-4 with Buildings #5 and #6, but the footprint of the infill appears to date to ca. 1945 as does the raised section running the length of the building. The original metal casement windows are still in place along the building's east elevation, now enclosed by the metal infill section (Photo 5). Sanborn maps label the footprint of the building collectively as 2, 3, & 4 with a two story office section at the north end and the rest called the machine shop. This building, along with Buildings #5 and #6, is under separate ownership from the rest of the district. Furthermore, this building did not appear to have any tenants during survey. For these reasons, the interior spaces were not

accessible during survey, but it appears buildings #2, #3, and #4 were constructed independently from buildings #5 and #6, thus justifying counting them separately.

## **Machine Shop (C)**

### **Building #5**

**3210 Garrow Street (Faces Preston Street)**

**ca. 1925, alteration ca. 1945**

One-and-a-half-story, commercial warehouse building with a corrugated metal gable roof with stucco parapet walls on the Preston elevation (Photo 3). The metal frame building is clad primarily with stucco and there is a concrete slab foundation. The structure has two long, raised sections along the gable peaks with metal casement clerestory windows. Window openings on the south and east elevations have been covered with standing seam metal. Two original door openings on the south elevation remain in place. While the eastern door has been replaced with a metal overhead door, the western door appears to be the original paired wood paneled doors with multi-light openings. The east elevation also features an original vehicular opening that has been covered and is inaccessible because of landscaping and a sidewalk extension. On the north side of the building is a loading bay that connects the building to Building #6. The bay has a chain link metal gate even with the exterior walls, but the raised loading dock and overhead framing used to load finished materials into trucks is visible. Metal infill on the west elevation connects Building #2-3-4 with Buildings #5 and #6, but the footprint of the infill appears to date to ca. 1945 as does the raised section running the length of the building. The original metal casement windows on the north elevation remain in place under the metal infill. The interior has exposed steel trusses and columns. No historic machinery is extant in the building. The space is open, with a concrete slab floor. Historically separate, the buildings remain structurally separate as their original exterior walls remain in place with original metal casement windows. This building, along with Building #2-3-4 and #6, is under separate ownership than the rest of the district and did not appear to have a tenant during survey. For these reasons, additional detail about the interior is unavailable.

## **Assembly Shop (C)**

### **Building #6**

**3210 Garrow Street**

**ca. 1925, alteration ca. 1945**

One-and-a-half-story, commercial warehouse building with a corrugated metal gable roof with stucco parapet walls on the north elevation. The metal frame building is clad primarily with stucco and there is a concrete slab foundation (Photo 3). The structure has two long, raised sections along the gable peaks with metal casement clerestory windows. There is standing seam metal infill over original window openings on the east and north elevations. The original metal casement windows for these elevations are visible on the interior. There is one large bay door opening on the western half of the north elevation, however no door was visible during the survey – only a chain link fence gates half the height of the opening. On the east elevation, there is brick and standing seam metal infill that is a former entry bay that has been made redundant through landscaping and the sidewalk. On the south elevation is a loading bay that connects the building to Building #5. The bay has a chain link metal gate even with the exterior walls, but the raised loading dock and overhead framing used to load finished materials into trucks is visible. Metal infill on the east elevation connects Building #2-3-4 with Buildings #5 and #6, but the footprint of the infill appears to date to ca. 1945 as does the raised section running the length of the building. The metal infill is structurally separate from both Building #2-3-4 and Building #6. The interior has exposed steel trusses and columns (Photo 6). No historic machinery is extant in the building. There are regularly spaced original ventilation fans along the walls of the half-story center section. The space is mostly open, with a one story, three-office section with a flat roof along the west wall; the original metal casement windows for Building #2-3-4 are visible along the west wall of this building. The interior

floor is concrete slab. Historically separate, metal infill has been constructed between Building #5 and Building #6. This infill, however, does not join the interior spaces of the two buildings and they remain separate structures.

## **Assembly Plant (C)**

### **Building #9**

**3215 Sherman Street**

**1945**

Facing south onto Sherman, Building #9 is a one-and-a-half-story, commercial warehouse building with a front gable, asphalt roof, a brick parapet wall, and a concrete slab foundation (Photos 7 and 8). The building spans the block, narrowing at the halfway point. There is a raised section down the center of the roof. The outline of "W.K.M." is visible on the parapet on the south elevation. The metal frame building is clad with brick, with corrugated metal covering historic clerestory window openings along the raised section of the east and west elevations. Windows on the east and west elevations are metal casement, behind metal screens, security bars, and metal coverings. There is a single leaf, flush metal entry door and a rolling up metal garage bay door on the south elevation. There is an additional overhead metal garage bay door on the north elevation facing onto Commerce. The interior has exposed steel trusses and columns (Photo 9). No historic machinery is extant in the building. The interior floor is concrete slab. A brick wall with steel swing windows and a garage bay opening connects Building #9 to the rear part of 3217 Sherman, which appears on historic Sanborn maps as an auto repair shop as well as to a locker room that appears on the Sanborn maps as WC. Though there are interior connections between the three buildings now, the buildings remain structurally independent of one another.

## **Shipping Warehouse (C)**

### **Building #10**

**205 Roberts Street**

**1945**

One-and-a-half-story, commercial warehouse building with a gable asphalt roof with raised center section, stucco parapet walls with "W.K.M." applied, and concrete foundation. The brick building is clad with stucco (Photo 10 and 11). In some locations, the underlying brick is visible. The only visible windows are along the raised section and are metal casements. Window openings along the west (Roberts) elevation have mostly been filled with standing seam metal, although paired metal casement windows are visible next to the metal flush single leaf door on this elevation. The north (Sherman) elevation has three raised loading bays with roll up metal garage doors. Two additional roll up metal garage doors face west onto Roberts, however these are at street level. The original metal casement windows located on the building's east elevation, now enclosed by Building #16, remain in place. The interior has wood posts and rafters with a concrete floor (Photo 12). There have been modifications to convert the space for office use, including new infill walls and kitchen area. There is a mezzanine workspace accessible by wood stairs, however it is unclear if this is a later addition or original. The building is connected on the interior to Building #16, which was constructed approximately three years later. Both Buildings #10 and #16 are occupied currently by the same tenant, who uses both buildings as if they a single unit. However, the buildings are structurally independent and historically separate, as Building #10 was a shipping warehouse, and Building #16 was a woodworking building. For these reasons, the buildings are counted as separate resources.

**Machine Shop (C)**  
**Building #11**  
**3218 Sherman Street**  
**1947**

Two-and-a-half-story, commercial warehouse building with a flat metal roof on a concrete slab foundation. The brick and metal frame building is clad primarily with its original corrugated wire glass curtain walls. The painted brick structure exists only as a base to the building. There are two bands of metal casement windows on all elevations, one just covered with metal above the brick base, the other serving as a spandrel band. The structure has a long, raised section down the center using the same corrugated wire glass curtain wall system, and there are regularly spaced metal downspouts on all sides of the building. All of the building's corners have flanking columns of corrugated metal panels.

The south elevation facing Garrow has a vehicular opening on the western end with a metal overhead door (Photo 14). The opening is additionally blocked with a chain link fence, and it is flanked by original corrugated metal panels. At the eastern end, there is a former opening that has been infilled with a matching brick base and a corrugated metal panel. Flanking this former opening are metal vents and a single solid metal door. At the center of the second floor, there is a metal fire escape extending from a single leaf flush metal door. The lower band of casement windows on this elevation have been covered by standing seam metal.

The west elevation faces onto the rail easement and to the original sites for Buildings #7 and #8 (demolished). The casement windows on this elevation have been covered almost entirely by standing seam metal. There is a covered loading dock located at the center of this elevation. The loading dock is one-and-a-half stories, and is clad in corrugated metal rather than wire glass. Historic photos of Building #11 do not show this elevation, but it is likely original and allowed easier cargo loading. The former sites for Buildings #7 and #8 now serve as parking areas for Building #11.

The east elevation faces onto Roberts Street and is the simplest elevation (Photo 14). Metal panels replacing sections of damaged wire glass is the only alteration to the elevation. The elevation never had doors. All of the lower band of casement windows have been covered with standing seam metal panels, though they are visible from the interior. The upper band of casement windows remains in place, and many of these remain operable.

The north elevation faces onto Sherman. There is a single vehicular opening centered on this elevation. There does not appear to be a door for this opening and instead is protected by a half-height chain link fence. The opening is flanked by two sections of corrugated metal panels, and there is a single solid metal door located in the eastern section. Both bands of casement windows have been covered by standing seam metal on this elevation.

The interior has steel trusses and columns (Photo 15). The first floor is concrete and the center section opens to the roof. A spiral metal stair leads from the first floor to the second. The second floor is also concrete and wraps around the interior perimeter of the building. There is an interior office on the first floor. No historic machinery is extant. Several original light fixtures are still extant, regularly spaced along the second floor deck.

**Office (C)**

**Building #13**

**201 (formerly 221) Roberts**

**1947**

Three-story, steel frame commercial building with a flat asphalt roof. It is clad with stucco and has a center section of fossilized limestone tiles on the west elevation (Photo 10 and 16). The foundation is concrete slab. The main entry door faces Roberts and is glass with a metal security door. A central, partial width awning covers the entry. There are three flush metal doors on the south (Garrow) elevation; two from the second and third floors provide egress onto an attached metal fire escape. On the first floor, the lobby has wood paneling and built in, recessed seating and a wood reception desk (Photo 17). Flooring in the lobby and common areas is tile. Offices on all floors typically have drop ceilings with acoustic tile. Flooring varies and does not appear original. Interior doors are typically flush, wood units. The first floor also has a metal safe door leading to what was originally the company vault. The second floor conference room features a fireplace with decorative marble mantle (Photo 18). This room also has fabric wall paper finishing. There is an additional conference room on the third floor. Walls in this room are clad with wood paneling, which appears in some the walls in the office spaces throughout the building as well. Other wall finishes are plaster.

There is access from the first floor interior to both 203 Roberts and the two warehouses located behind 201 Roberts, all of which are collectively labeled on Sanborn Maps as Building #14, #15, and #19. From the exterior, however, all four structures read as separate buildings and are structurally independent of each other (Photo 19). In addition, Building #13, labeled as an office, serves a disparate function than Buildings #14, #15, and #19, which are labeled as a warehouse. For these reasons, Building #13 is counted independently from the other resources.

**Warehouse (C)**

**Building #14**

**203 Roberts Street**

**1947**

One story, commercial warehouse building with a flat corrugated metal roof behind a stucco parapet wall. The steel frame building is clad with corrugated metal. There are two visible windows, both metal fixed units, and a metal door with rectangular light. The interior has finished walls and exposed steel trusses supporting the roof. Floors are concrete. Though each building retains a separate construction year, Sanborn maps show this space, along with Building #15 and Building #19 as one big collective warehouse. Both interior and exterior evaluation of the spaces, however, show that they are independent spaces. The rear (east) wall of Building #14 forms part of the west wall of Building #15. Two window openings and a door opening on this wall have been infilled, although it is not clear when, but does indicate that of the three, this was the oldest building and once had an exposed rear elevation. There is also access from Building #13, however, all four buildings are functionally independent.

**Warehouse (C)**

**Building #15**

**201 Roberts Street (faces Garrow)**

**1948**

One-story, steel frame warehouse building with a corrugated metal gable roof and a stucco parapet wall (Photo 16). Three of the four walls are corrugated metal, including the east wall which is shared with Building #19. The fourth (west) wall using the rear of Building #13 and Building #14 as a shared wall. Though each building retains a separate construction year, Sanborn maps show this space, along with Building #14 and Building #19 as one big collective

warehouse. Both interior and exterior evaluation of the spaces, however, show that they are independent spaces. The rear (east) wall of Building #14 forms part of the west wall of Building #15. Two window openings and a door opening on this wall have been infilled, although it is not clear when. Building #15 and Building #19 have a party wall with a single pedestrian door, preventing shared functionality of the two buildings that were historically warehouses (Photo 20). There is also access from Building #13, however, all four buildings are functionally independent. There is a roll-up metal garage door. The interior is open, with exposed metal framing and concrete floor.

## **Woodworking Building (C)**

### **Building #16**

**3308 Sherman Street**

**1948**

One-and-a-half-story, commercial warehouse building facing north with a front gable corrugated metal roof with raised center section, stucco parapet wall, and concrete foundation (Photo 11). The steel frame building is clad with corrugated metal on the east, west, and south elevations. The north elevation was likely corrugated metal and is now clad in stucco to retain continuity with Building #10 on its west. The only windows visible from the exterior are along the raised section and are metal casements. There is a flush metal single leaf entry door and a roll up metal garage door on the north elevation. The interior has metal trusses and a concrete floor (Photo 13). There is a corrugated metal office space on the interior as well. Divided metal frame windows are on the west wall facing Building #10. This wall is the only interior wall with a plaster finish. There is no historic machinery extant.

## **Heat Treating Building (C)**

### **Building #17**

**3303 Sherman Street**

**1948**

One-story, commercial warehouse building with a front gable corrugated metal roof and concrete foundation (Photo 21). The steel frame building is clad with corrugated metal. There are no visible windows, but there is a metal vent in the gable end. Ventilation fans are visible along the gable ridge. The Sherman elevation has a flush metal single leaf entry door and a central garage bay with a sliding corrugated metal door. The interior is open, with steel trusses and a concrete floor (Photo 22). It appears that the light fixtures are original. Two machines are in the building, however, the use and age are undetermined.

## **Warehouse (C)**

### **Building #18**

**3308 Garrow Street**

**1949**

One-story, steel frame warehouse building with a corrugated metal gable roof with a stucco parapet wall (Photo 23). It is clad with corrugated metal on the east and west elevations while the north elevation is stuccoed. There are no windows. There is a roll-up metal garage door and a single leaf flush metal entry door facing Garrow. The interior has steel trusses and a concrete floor (Photo 24). Several finished walls create office spaces. From the interior, there is a regular pattern of lighter corrugated roofing material which function as skylights.

**Warehouse (C)**  
**Building #19**  
**201 Roberts (faces Garrow)**  
**1949**

One-story, steel frame warehouse building with a corrugated metal gable roof with a stucco parapet wall (Photo 16). The southeast elevation is clad with corrugated metal. There are no windows, only a metal vent on the southeast elevation. There is a roll-up metal garage door and a single leaf flush metal entry door facing Garrow. The interior is open, with steel trusses and a concrete floor. Though each building retains a separate construction year, Sanborn maps show this space, along with Building #14 and Building #15 as one big collective warehouse. Both interior and exterior evaluation of the spaces, however, show that they are independent spaces. Building #15 and Building #19 have a party wall (Photo 20). There is also access from Building #13 through Building #15, however, all four buildings are functionally independent.

**Warehouse (C)**  
**Building #20**  
**3302 Garrow Street**  
**1949**

One-story, steel frame warehouse building with a corrugated metal gable roof with a stucco parapet wall (Photo 23). It is clad with stucco. There are no windows. There are two roll-up metal garage doors facing Garrow Street and an additional roll up metal garage door facing Roberts Street. Two single leaf flush metal doors face Garrow, each next to one of the garage doors. The interior has steel trusses and a concrete floor. The open interior has infill to create offices with a hallway under each gable.

**Machine Shop (C)**  
**Building #21**  
**3301 Sherman Street**  
**1949**

Two-and-a-half-story, commercial warehouse building with a flat metal roof on a concrete slab foundation (Photo 25). The steel frame building is clad with a mix of corrugated wire glass curtain walls, standing seam metal, corrugated metal, painted brick, and metal casement windows. There are two bands of metal casement windows on all elevations (mostly covered with metal), one just above the brick base, the other serving as a spandrel band. The structure has a long, raised section using the same corrugated wire glass curtain wall system. This section is off-set to the right of center. There are regularly spaced metal downspouts on all sides of the building. All of the building's corners have flanking columns of corrugated metal panels.

The south elevation facing Sherman has a vehicular opening on the eastern end with a metal overhead door. This entry is centered under the raise section. The opening is additionally blocked with a chain link fence, and it is flanked by original corrugated metal panels. On the western end, there is a flush metal single leaf door. The single leaf door is under an attached corrugated metal awning supported by metal posts.

The Roberts (west) elevation has two raised loading bay openings with metal roll up garage doors. The openings are additionally blocked with a chain link fence, and flanked by original corrugated metal panels. Damaged sections of the wire glass have been replaced by corrugated metal, including a large section covering all levels of the north elevation. Some of the original casement windows are visible above the brick base in the central portion of this

elevation. The Commerce (north) elevation has a large bay of mostly replacement corrugated metal with paired corrugated metal doors. At the top of the bay, framing for loading of materials is still extant.

The interior has steel trusses and columns (Photo 26). The first floor is concrete and the center section opens to the roof. The second floor is also concrete and wraps around three sides of the interior perimeter. There is an interior office on the first floor. No historic machinery is extant. Several original light fixtures are still extant, regularly spaced along the second floor deck.

## **Auto Repair Shop (NC)**

**3217 Sherman Street**

**Original date of construction ca. 1944, alteration ca. 1960, after the period of significance**

One-story, commercial warehouse building with a front gable, corrugated metal roof and a concrete slab foundation (Photo 7). The metal frame building is clad with corrugated metal. There is a single leaf, flush metal entry door and a vehicular entry with an overhead metal door. There is a partial width, flat, corrugated metal awning centered on the southwest elevation. There are no visible windows.

The historic auto repair shop located on this site remains in place. However, an addition was constructed circa 1960, after W-K-M relocated to their Missouri City facilities, and enveloped the original shop. The alteration caused this resource to lose its integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. While historic age, the current configuration falls outside the period of significance. For those reasons, the building at 3217 Sherman is a non-contributing resource to the historic district.

## **Integrity**

The district retains integrity of location, materials, feeling, and association, and a somewhat diminished integrity of design, workmanship, and setting. The W-K-M historic district remains in its original location, east of downtown Houston, and the center of the district retains the feeling of a light industrial manufacturing complex. However, outside the district, the setting has converted from predominantly light industrial manufacturing and working class housing to denser single-family and multi-family housing. Though many light industrial complexes remain, their number is dwindling, making W-K-M one of the intact complexes in this part of Houston.

Though most alterations occurred during the period of significance and are considered historic alterations, minor alterations over the last sixty years have resulted in somewhat diminished integrity of design and workmanship. These alterations include covering or removal of original windows, loss of original signage, installation of new doors, and additions of new fire escapes for life safety. However, these losses are ultimately minor. The district retains integrity of materials, particularly in Buildings #11 and #21, where they retain their original corrugated wire glass curtain walls. Building #13 also retains its original limestone tile ornament. Many of the vernacular warehouse buildings retain original windows, stucco, and framing, allowing the district to continue to convey the variety of original materials used in W-K-M's construction.

Furthermore, only two W-K-M buildings have been demolished outside the period of significance, so the district retains its original spacing and density. The district's occupation over six city blocks continues to convey how the company manufactured and shipped its products. The retention of so much of the original historic fabric bolsters its integrity of association and feeling.

**SBR Draft**

W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

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**District Inventory Table**

<b>WKM Building #</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Construction Date</b>	<b>Contributing/Non- Contributing</b>
2, 3, & 4	3210A Garrow Street	ca. 1925	C
5	3210 Garrow Street	ca. 1925	C
6	3210 Garrow Street	ca. 1925	C
9	3215 Sherman Street	1945	C
10	205 Roberts Street	1945	C
11	3218 Sherman Street	1947	C
13	201 Roberts Street	1947	C
14	203 Roberts Street	1947	C
15	201 Roberts Street	1948	C
16	3308 Sherman Street	1948	C
17	3303 Sherman Street	1948	C
18	3308 Garrow Street	1949	C
19	201 Roberts Street	1949	C
20	3302 Garrow Street	1949	C
21	3301 Sherman Street	1949	C
N/A	3217 Sherman Street	ca. 1944, altered ca. 1960	NC

## Statement of Significance

W-K-M Company, Incorporated was founded in 1919 by Clint F. Williams, L. O. Koen, and Fred McManis. Originally named Williams-Koen-McManis, they quickly shortened the name to the internationally recognized brand it became. W-K-M, an oil and gas pipeline supplier, is best known for their precedent-setting and innovative pipe cleaning and coating machines and high-pressure valves; both of these technologies are essential for oil and gas well maintenance and function. W-K-M's patented designs have been staples for pipeline projects since the 1920s and at their peak, and marketing materials indicate W-K-M valves were used on over 75% of all oil and gas pipelines worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Government contracts during World War II led to rapid expansion of both their services and their campus in the post-war period. Though the company was purchased in 1954, the W-K-M brand was so well known and respected that the brand endured, even when no longer independently operated. To date, the W-K-M brand continues as a trademarked line of products for Cameron, a subsidiary of Schlumberger. The W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Commerce and Industry at a local level of significance with a period of significance of 1925-1957.

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The modern oil and gas industry first traces its history to 1806 when brothers David and Joseph Ruffner constructed the first deliberate, tool-made well near what is now Charleston, West Virginia.<sup>2</sup> The Ruffner well, as it is now known, was constructed in order to dig deeper into the spring on their land, intending to extract larger quantities of brine than they were receiving naturally. Building on the success of the Ruffner well, other citizens and companies began construction wells for the purpose of commercial extraction and sale.

The introduction of industry and machinery meant that the whale oil industry was no longer capable of producing all of the oil necessary, and entrepreneurs were ready to find the next new product. Though other wells in the nineteenth century had identified petroleum, the first well deliberately constructed for the extraction of commercial-use oil was the Drake Well, constructed in 1859 in Titusville, Pennsylvania with an output of 20-30 oil barrels (bbl) per day.<sup>3</sup> Following the Drake Well, other petroleum wells in the United States and globally were constructed, with the United States as the leading producer of petroleum and petroleum products.<sup>4</sup> In 1901, however, Texas alone would become the nation's leader in petroleum output.

On January 10, 1901, Spindletop, near Beaumont, Texas, became an icon of the modern oil and gas industry. Though Texas was already producing oil during the late nineteenth century, the quantities of oil coming from Spindletop changed the state's economy and set the stage for Texas' future. The first well at Spindletop, known as the Lucas Gusher, produced over 100,000 bbl per day, more than 3,000 times that of the Drake well. Wells at Spindletop produced more oil in a single day than every other well in the world combined.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the unexpected size of the well lead the owners to scramble as they tried to find a way to temper the flow. It took the team nine days to create the first multiple-valve control apparatus, commonly called a Christmas Tree.<sup>6</sup> These types of valves would become W-K-M's specialty.

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<sup>1</sup> Photo caption, December 27, 1954. Photo by Bob Bailly. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 7, Folder 2. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>2</sup> J.E. Brantly, History of Oil Well Drilling, Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1971, pg. 6.

<sup>3</sup> J.E. Brantly, History of Oil Well Drilling, Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1971, pg. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "Spindletop launches Modern Petroleum Industry," Petroleum History Almanac, American Oil & Gas Society. Accessed July 27, 2017 <http://aoghs.org/oil-almanac/spindletop-launches-modern-oil-industry/>

<sup>6</sup> Diana Davis Olien & Roger M. Olien, Oil in Texas: the Gusher Age, 1895-1945. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002, pg. 31.

Though the initial spate of high-producing oil wells were located near Beaumont and Port Arthur, in 1908 the Texas Company, commonly known as Texaco, relocated its corporate headquarters to Houston.<sup>7</sup> Soon, the other major oil companies followed suite and while the Beaumont and Port Arthur areas represented some of the greatest refining centers in the world in 1920, Houston was the corporate center of the petroleum industry in Texas.<sup>8</sup> In addition to major oil companies establishing their headquarters in the city, Houston and the surrounding area also saw an influx industrial manufactures specializing in oil field equipment. For instance, Union Iron Works in 1906 began selling and marketing pipe specifically for oil movement, and Hughes Tool Company began producing specialty drill bits that would work well in the Gulf Coastal soils.<sup>9</sup>

W-K-M Company, Incorporated was founded in 1919 in Houston, Texas as another such oil and gas pipeline supplier, and they became a particularly important company for the production of rotary slips and pipeline valves.<sup>10</sup> Using \$800 of their own cash and a \$2,000 loan, founders Clint F. Williams, L.O. Koen, and Fred McManis located their manufacturing and distribution company to the east of Houston's downtown. Their first offices were a warehouse and a repurposed residence near the corner of Velasco and Roberts Streets in a predominantly industrial area. The company also rented space in the Beatty-West Building at the corner of Walker and Main downtown until at least 1927.<sup>11</sup> The 1930 City Directory, however, reports that their general offices were within the proposed district boundaries at Congress (now Garrow) and Roberts.

W-K-M formally incorporated in November 1922 with Williams, McManis, and D.J. Bryant listed as incorporators on their filings. Bryant had been serving as Secretary on the Board of Directors. Koen, though not an incorporator, was listed as one of the company's directors.<sup>12</sup>

Williams served as company president through 1926, with Koen and McManis both serving as vice presidents; McManis additionally took on the role of general manager.<sup>13</sup> Williams did not stay in Houston for long, moving to Mexia, Texas and then later to Tonkawa, Oklahoma. These moves can be tracked in the company's increased sales in those areas as well as through census records.<sup>14</sup> Williams also owned Williams Iron Works, which was one of W-K-M's early suppliers.<sup>15</sup> Williams was granted four patents, three of which were granted posthumously as an incorporator for Williams Iron Works. Williams' 1925 patent improves oil well elevators, while his posthumous 1936 and 1938 patents all relate to oil well drill bits.<sup>16</sup> Williams' innovation was unfortunately cut short when he died in a plane crash outside of Fort Worth in 1930.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Anna Mod, "Texas Company Building," National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 2002, Section 8, pg. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Diana Davis Olien & Roger M. Olien, Oil in Texas: the Gusher Age, 1895-1945. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002, pg. 60.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pg. 60.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pg. 61.

<sup>11</sup> "WKM Price Sheet & Description pamphlet no. 265, effective June 10, 1927," ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 6, Folder 3. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>12</sup> Charter, W-K-M Company, Inc. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 5, Folder 2. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>13</sup> Houston City Directory, 1925.

<sup>14</sup> W-K-M Sales, 1921. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 2, Folder 4. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.; 1930 Census Records, Oklahoma.

<sup>15</sup> Transfer General Ledger, W-K-M Inc. 1922-1925. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 2, Folder 7. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>16</sup> United States Patents No. 1,543,966, No. 2,058,749, No. 2,058,750, and No. 2,124,521.

<sup>17</sup> "Tonkawa Air Victim to be Buried Here," *The Oklahoman*. April 29, 1930. Article copied to Williams' Find-a-Grave listing, accessed April 14, 2017. <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=58563327>

McManis, who took over as company president following Williams' departure, also held four patents to his name, and Koen held three. McManis' 1928 patented device for cleaning and coating pipe revolutionized the oil and gas industry by mechanizing work that was previously exclusively manual. McManis' patent has been referenced fifteen times since being filed, including most recently in 2004.<sup>18</sup> Koen's 1935 rotary slip design has been referenced over two dozen times by other patents, including most recently in 2007.<sup>19</sup> W-K-M additionally was the assignee for another two dozen patents filed by their employees between 1919 and 1954. The continued references and citations back to their design speaks to the quality and precedence of the work, and the number of unique patents for which W-K-M was the assignee allowed them to be the sole manufacturer for a number of in-demand products.

While W-K-M is not a household brand name as they did not manufacture consumer goods, petroleum companies are very familiar with their products and the advancements they brought to the industry, particularly their valves. Piping valves allow suppliers to control the flow of product from the source to its destination. Valves are most useful for ensuring that the quantity of oil does not overwhelm the pipes and that the flow can be stopped in case of a spill. Valves also allow the flow to be stopped so that the pipes can be maintained.<sup>20</sup> As the oil industry continued to grow and drill in new locations, suppliers such as W-K-M, developed new products to meet the changing needs.

[W-K-M] produced many industry firsts, including the first 5,000, 10,000, 15,000, and 20,000 psi gate valves and the first dual, triple and quadruple completion gate valves. The company pioneered the development of new materials for critical applications and for hostile environments such as hydrogen sulfide. It was also the first to manufacture valves and actuators for ocean floor completions. In 1933, W-K-M introduced the first through-conduit expanding gate valve for oil and gas well control. Known today as the Pow-R-Seal gate valve, it was undergone numerous refinements and improvements while retaining its basic design. After World War II, W-K-M began to design and manufacture pipeline valves in the through-conduit expanding gate design. The company quickly established itself as a leader in this industry and expanded its facilities to meet heavy demand.<sup>21</sup>

A "completion" as it relates to gate valves refers to "the assembly of downhole tubulars and equipment required to enable safe and efficient production from an oil or gas well."<sup>22</sup> The increased number of completions would have been coupled with increased psi capabilities, allowing oil companies to drill higher pressure wells more safely. An actuator is a "type of motor that is responsible for moving or controlling a mechanism or system."<sup>23</sup> Actuators would be necessary for controlling valves located on the ocean floor for off-shore rigs, as those depths are not safe for personnel. W-K-M's specialty, the high-pressure gate valve, creates a solid barrier (or gate) within a pipe run in order to stop or redirect the

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<sup>18</sup> Fred McManis, "Device for cleaning and coating pipe," Patent No. US 1821352 A, March 22, 1928. United States Patent Office. Available at <https://www.google.com/patents/US1821352>

<sup>19</sup> L.O. Koen, "Rotary Slip," Patent No. US 2231923 A, December 2, 1935. United States Patent Office. Available at <https://www.google.com/patents/US2231923>

<sup>20</sup> "Fact Sheet: Valves on a Pipeline," National Energy Board, Government of Canada, updated December 1, 2016. Accessed July 27, 2017 <https://www.neb-one.gc.ca/bts/nws/fs/vlvpplnfs-eng.html>

<sup>21</sup> "At W-K-M, progress with 'zero defects'." *The Oil Daily*, May 6, 1985, C13. *General OneFile* (accessed October 26, 2017). <http://go.galegroup.com.proxy1.athensams.net/ps/i.do?p=ITOF&sw=w&u=txshrp100185&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CA3764462&asid=454977f56d61a6da6b9e6c60820f822>. W-K-M's pioneering Pow-R-Seal gate valve is still produced in 2017 by Cameron, nearly 100 years after W-K-M was established.

<sup>22</sup> "Completion," *Oilfield Glossary*, Schlumberger. Accessed October 27, 2017 <http://www.glossary.oilfield.slb.com/Terms/c/completion.aspx>

<sup>23</sup> Davecramer, "What are actuators and Different Types of Actuators?" Western Design Center, Inc. December 9, 2016. Accessed October 27, 2017 <http://wdc65xx.com/lessons/what-are-actuators-and-different-types-of-actuators/>

flow of product. A through conduit gate valve differs from a typical gate valve by ensuring that the gate is connected to the main body of the valve. A through conduit valve also allows for a gate that matches the diameter of the pipe, making it possible to send pipe-cleaning devices through the pipes to remove debris and deposits from the pipe interior.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to their valves, W-K-M was best known for their pipe coating machines and rotary slips. Pipe coating machines followed the path of an oil and gas pipeline and applied exterior coatings to the pipes in order to prevent deterioration.<sup>25</sup> Rotary slips hold large pipes in place while new sections of pipe are screwed onto the end of the existing pipe. They also ensure that pieces of pipe do not fall down the well.<sup>26</sup> These products are all essential for pipeline and oil well maintenance, and W-K-M's patented designs quickly dominated the industry. In particular, at its peak, W-K-M valves were used on over 75% of all oil and gas pipelines worldwide.

As the industry demand for W-K-M products grew, so did W-K-M. The company's 1951 general ledger listed the company's real estate holdings to that point. At the beginning of January 1927, W-K-M owned parts of blocks 545, 553, 554, and 555 with buildings facing onto Roberts, and by the end of the month, the company purchased a new parcel on block 554, and another new parcel on that same block was purchased in May that year. Those parcels were the last real estate purchases the company made until after World War II.<sup>27</sup>

As the United States provided aid to Allied nations and joined the war effort at the end of 1941, the City of Houston became a prime location for many defense contracts with the available transportation networks, including rail, automobile, and the Houston Ship Channel allowing for distribution of goods manufactured for the war effort. Houston's industrial sector, particularly petrochemical companies and the oil and gas companies, expanded tremendously during World War II, producing synthetic rubber in addition to the fuel required to keep the war effort moving.<sup>28</sup>

W-K-M started receiving defense-related contracts as early as June 1941, months before the United States' official entrance into World War II. As President of the company, McManis sent a letter to the stockholders in June 1941 stating that W-K-M had a "large backlog of unfilled orders" and that "a substantial part of this is defense work."<sup>29</sup> By 1942, the company reported that "the business which the Company will do for some time in the future will largely be on Government Contracts and will amount to considerably more per month than during normal times and on normal lines of equipment."<sup>30</sup> By 1943, sales were 250% greater than they were in 1941.<sup>31</sup> In 1944, government contracts made up 81.5% of all sales.<sup>32</sup> A 1946 letter from the Price Adjustment Board under the United States Maritime Commission

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<sup>24</sup> Ankit Chugh, "Gate Valve Types, Construction, Applications and Advantages," *Piping Guide*, October 2013. Accessed October 27, 2017 <http://www.pipingguide.net/2013/10/gate-valve-types-construction.html>

<sup>25</sup> James D. Cummings, "Pipe Coating Apparatus," United States Patent Office. Filed January 12, 1929, approved April 19, 1932. Serial No. 332,147.

<sup>26</sup> "Slips," Oilfield Glossary, Schlumberger Limited. Accessed July 27, 2017 <http://www.glossary.oilfield.slb.com/Terms/s/slips.aspx>

<sup>27</sup> "Real Estate," General Ledger to 1951. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 3, Folder 2. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>28</sup> Grace Cynkar, Kristen Brown, Anna Mod, and James Steely, "Modernist Commercial, Governmental, and Institutional Buildings in Houston, Texas, 1945-1976. Multiple Property Documentation Form. January 2015. On file at Texas Historical Commission. Pg. 6-7.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Fred McManis, President, to "all Common and Preferred Stockholders of W-K-M Company, Inc." June 10, 1941. Series 22, Box 1, Folder 6. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>30</sup> Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, W-K-M Co., Inc. August 7, 1942. Series 22, Box 1, Folder 6. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>31</sup> "Renegotiation File, 1942-1943." Series 22, Box 5, Folder 6. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>32</sup> "Form A Annual Financial Report," April 24, 1944. Series 22, Box 1, Folder 11. St. Louis Mercantile Library, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

# SBR Draft

W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

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indicates that most of W-K-M's government contracts were related to naval construction and valves for naval vessels.<sup>33</sup> Though no records indicate precisely what services and products were provided to the U.S. Navy, gate valves, W-K-M's specialty, are particularly important to maritime construction and use.<sup>34</sup> W-K-M's expertise in high-pressure valves and their innovations in valves safe for use on the ocean floor would have been invaluable to the Navy and may have contributed to submarine construction.

W-K-M's participation in wartime manufacturing was not unique. During World War II, President Roosevelt issued an edict that the United States "must out-produce [our enemies] so overwhelmingly, so that there can be no question of our ability to provide a crushing superiority of equipment in any theatre of the world war."<sup>35</sup> Following the attack at Pearl Harbor, manufacturing companies of all types were engaged for wartime manufacturing. For instance, the automobile manufacturers collectively produced over 3 million vehicles in 1941; during the four years the U.S. was involved officially in the war, they collectively produced just 139 cars.<sup>36</sup> The government's demand for goods generated a 96% increase in industrial productivity, and corporate after-tax profits more than doubled.<sup>37</sup>

A 1943 letter from the company's renegotiation file, presumably to the wartime Price Adjustment Board, indicated that the company's first priorities following World War II would be repairs to existing machinery and buildings as well as the reestablishment of the company's sales force. The letter states that

As a result of 168 hours continuous work per week, our machinery and equipment show plenty of wear – we estimate an expenditure of over \$100,000.00 to replace our machines and tools alone, after the war when they are available to us. During 1941, a pre war [sic] year, we spent \$7,975.55 on repairs to machinery and equipment, while in 1943 the cost was \$41,280.44, which is self explanatory [sic].

In this same letter, the company also estimated a cost of up to \$35,000.00 to replace the concrete flooring in their plant buildings and "thousands of dollars post war expense" to reorganize the company sales force, both nationally and internationally.<sup>38</sup> As a result, no new real estate was purchased until 1947.

Following World War II, Houston's politicians and civic leaders were determined to retain their enormous wartime boom. Local efforts resulted in Houston's continued growth, visible in the city's jump from the 21<sup>st</sup> largest city in the nation in 1940 to 14<sup>th</sup> in 1950, and 7<sup>th</sup> by 1960. Houston's economic success brought more federal projects during the 1960s, including a new federal post office and most notably the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Manned Spacecraft Center, now Johnson Space Center. Other local growth following World War II included growth of

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<sup>33</sup> Letter from John R. Paull at Price Adjustment Board under United States Maritime Commission. February 24, 1946. Series 22, Box 5, Folder 1. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>34</sup> Ashish, "Types of Valves Used on Ships: Gate Valve – Part 1," *Marine Insight*, February 7, 2017. Accessed October 26, 2017 <https://www.marineinsight.com/tech/types-of-valves-used-on-ships-gate-valve-part-1/>

<sup>35</sup> "War Production." *The War*. Public Broadcasting Service. September 2007. Accessed October 26, 2017 [http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at\\_home\\_war\\_production.htm](http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_home_war_production.htm)

<sup>36</sup> "War Production." *The War*. Public Broadcasting Service. September 2007. Accessed October 26, 2017 [http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at\\_home\\_war\\_production.htm](http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_home_war_production.htm)

<sup>37</sup> Doris Goodwin, "The Way We Won: America's Economic Breakthrough During World War II," *The American Prospect*. Fall 1992. Accessed October 26, 2017 <http://prospect.org/article/way-we-won-americas-economic-breakthrough-during-world-war-ii>

<sup>38</sup> "Renegotiation file, 1942-1943," pg. 1. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 5, Folder 6. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

the petrochemical industry, refineries along the Houston Ship Channel, and the founding of the Texas Medical Center. Houston was determined to use the momentum from World War II for sustainable growth.<sup>39</sup>

W-K-M followed the same growth patterns as the rest of the city. Though presumably the company first completed the repairs and replacements required for their equipment and existing facilities, the company's expansion into through-conduit gate valve design and manufacturing necessitated more space.<sup>40</sup> In May 1947, the company purchased a parcel on block 545 and three parcels on block 546. Two more parcels on block 545 were purchased in June 1947, and the last of the company's real estate in east downtown included five parcels on block 544 in March 1948.<sup>41</sup> A diagram of their real estate holdings over time is included as Figure 3, though there are some parcels that go unmentioned in the available accounting records. These parcels, however, were historically W-K-M-owned, as is visible through the construction of the district's contributing resources in and near those locations.

At their peak, the campus included at least eighteen buildings spread over six blocks. Though the remaining company records are extensive, the records do not include a map of the campus at its peak. The only extant documentation of the campus comes from the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps. New buildings typically were constructed immediately adjacent to existing warehouses and shops, making it difficult to read on the Sanborn maps the exact number of buildings on site. It is assumed that the building numbers on the Sanborn maps match the building numbers in the company's financial records.

Records indicate that in 1944, W-K-M's buildings included their general office, a garage, Warehouse 2-3-4, Warehouse 5, Warehouse 6, Building 7, Building 8, and Building 9 with construction for Building 10 beginning at the end of 1944. Payments for Building 11 first appear in 1946, with payments for Buildings 12-14 beginning in 1947. Buildings 16-19 are entered on the books in 1948, and Buildings 20 and 21 are completed in 1949.<sup>42</sup> The payments for all of the post-war construction went to Brown Construction, however, the records do not have enough information to trace accurately precisely which Brown Construction Company was involved. The real estate purchases and new construction clearly went hand-in-hand as W-K-M took advantage of the post-war economy to expand and prosper.

Koen retired in 1943, and in 1949, McManis, as the only remaining founder, dissolved and sold the company in what is assumed to be an effort to get his affairs in order at the end of his life.<sup>43</sup> The company's stock was sold, and the proceeds split between Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas and to Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois; the two institutions had equal ownership over the company.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Grace Cynkar, Kristen Brown, Anna Mod, and James Steely, "Modernist Commercial, Governmental, and Institutional Buildings in Houston, Texas, 1945-1976. Multiple Property Documentation Form. January 2015. On file at Texas Historical Commission. Pg. 7-8, 12.

<sup>40</sup> "At W-K-M, progress with 'zero defects'." *The Oil Daily*, May 6, 1985, C13. *General OneFile* (accessed October 26, 2017). <http://go.galegroup.com.proxy1.athensams.net/ps/i.do?p=ITOF&sw=w&u=txshrp100185&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CA3764462&asid=454977f56d61a6da6b9e6c60820f822>.

<sup>41</sup> "Real Estate," General Ledger to 1951. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 3, Folder 2. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>42</sup> "Buildings," General Ledger to 1951. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 3, Folder 2. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>43</sup> Presentation by ACF Industries, Incorporated to AMA (American Management Association) Conference on Acquisition of W-K-M. November 2, 1956, pg. Bootes 8. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 1, Folder 1. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

<sup>44</sup> Minutes of Special Meeting of Board of Directors. October 10, 1949. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 1, Folder 5. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

Each participating institution would only have to put up a minimal sum to become fully invested as an owner. The value of the W-K-M stock would be set at \$250 per share, with twenty thousand shares being issued for \$5 million. The institutions would pay only \$1 per share at the outset, at which point all the company stock would be distributed among them. The other \$249 of the share value would be paid to the McManis couple over the years out of the earnings of the company, now under the ownership of the participating institutions. Seventy percent of the annual earnings would be paid on the stock purchases, 20 percent would be carried to the operating reserve, and 10 percent would be paid out to the new owners *pro rata* until the stock was paid out. McManis would at the outset remain as active manager of the company.<sup>45</sup>

McManis was only loosely affiliated with both religiously-oriented institutions. One of McManis' relatives had recommended Wheaton College as a valuable investment following the stock market crash in 1929, and he became a regular donor to the college during the next twenty years.<sup>46</sup> Southwestern University and McManis were affiliated with the Methodist religion, and there is some evidence that McManis had been making anonymous contributions to the university for many years.<sup>47</sup> Adjusted for inflation, W-K-M's 1949 \$250 stock value would be almost \$2,600 per share in 2017. As a comparison, General Motors stock value in 1949 was a little more than \$38 per share.<sup>48</sup> Hughes Tool, another industrial products manufacturer did not become a publically traded company until 1972, so direct comparisons to a similar company are difficult to evaluate.<sup>49</sup>

Under the arrangement for the two institutions, "Southwestern's annual share of earnings from the company increased from \$4,877.24 to \$147,053.49 over the five years it was half-owner of the company, a total of \$384,743.29, a regular outside income the like of which the school had never before experienced."<sup>50</sup> Since the two schools had equal shares, Wheaton College likely saw the same returns and impact.

Prior to 1950, when Congress revised the tax code, non-profit organizations did not pay taxes on any for-profit entities under their control. Organizations had to settle any debts associated with the for-profit entity before the new regulations took effect, so the two institutions were not affected until 1954, and both schools divested their interests in W-K-M before they were subject to paying taxes.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> William B. Jones, To Survive and Excel: the Story of Southwestern University, 1840-2000. Georgetown, Texas: Southwestern University Press, 2006, pg. 379.

<sup>46</sup> "McManis Hall," Wheaton History A to Z, Wheaton College. Accessed October 26, 2017 <http://a2z.my.wheaton.edu/student-housing/mcmanis-hall>

<sup>47</sup> William B. Jones, To Survive and Excel: the Story of Southwestern University, 1840-2000. Georgetown, Texas: Southwestern University Press, 2006, pg. 379.

<sup>48</sup> "First November Meeting, 1949," Proceedings of the Board of Regents, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pg. 526.

<sup>49</sup> Nicholas Lemann, "Texas Primer: the Hughes Tool Bit," Texas Monthly, February 1982. Accessed October 28, 2017 <https://www.texasmonthly.com/the-culture/texas-primer-the-hughes-drill-bit/>

<sup>50</sup> William B. Jones, To Survive and Excel: the Story of Southwestern University, 1840-2000. Georgetown, Texas: Southwestern University Press, 2006, pg. 379.

<sup>51</sup> Presentation by ACF Industries, Incorporated to AMA (American Management Association) Conference on Acquisition of W-K-M. November 2, 1956, pgs. Bootes 8-9. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 1, Folder 1. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

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That year, American Car & Foundry (ACF), later called ACF Industries, purchased W-K-M from Southwestern and Wheaton for more than \$7 million, closing the deal at the Lamar Hotel in Houston.<sup>52</sup> Southwestern reports that it sold its half for \$3,565,433.87 with \$3,055,378.15 going directly into their endowment.<sup>53</sup> Adjusted for inflation, Southwestern's contribution to their endowment would total more than \$28,000,000 in 2017.<sup>54</sup> Though no records for Wheaton's portion of the sale have been identified, the two institutions' equal ownership of the company suggests the same total amount as Southwestern. How Wheaton used their windfall, however, is unknown.

When it purchased W-K-M, ACF Industries was best known for its railcar production and their work in low-pressure valves. Due to the popularity, reliability, and respect afforded to the W-K-M brand, ACF elected to retain the W-K-M brand as a separate subsidiary and keeping on W-K-M's 425 employees to continue their legacy of innovation and access to their oil and gas partners.<sup>55</sup> The new legal name for the ACF subsidiary was the W-K-M Manufacturing Company.<sup>56</sup>

While under control of Southwestern and Wheaton, there were very few – if any – upgrades to the Houston properties, which included all the resources in the current district boundaries. In a 1956 presentation about their acquisition of W-K-M, ACF leaders noted:

W-K-M's production was accomplished in a plant in Houston that, like the ACF valve facilities in Detroit, was inadequate. Equipment was old, and some of it was obsolete. The physical arrangement was impractical. The plant was sprawled over parts of six city blocks in a busy section of Houston: items could be moved from one building to another only through gaps in traffic...the streets and sidewalks were used as excess storage space.<sup>57</sup>

These concerns regarding W-K-M's existing facilities spurred ACF's construction of a new valve manufacturing facility in Missouri City, Texas, a suburb of Houston. The decision to remain in the Houston area allowed ACF to retain all of W-K-M's staff while enlarging the facility and providing room for future expansion. The new W-K-M plant in Missouri City opened in 1956 with all operations completely moved to the site by the end of 1957.

Following W-K-M's departure from the site, the buildings were purchased by real estate investors and have been leased to other companies. The buildings were purchased by the current owners in 1974, though the name of the legal entities has changed. Typical tenants in the buildings continued to be light industrial manufacturers. These tenants have included Stewart and Stevenson Company; Wolf Valve Company, which repaired valves; Clayton Manufacturing Company, which provided uniforms; Restline Bedding Company, which made mattresses; Dixie Glass wall system manufacturers; and Verne Engineering, small water craft manufacturers. In 2017, tenants in former W-K-M buildings include TXRX Labs in buildings 9, 10, 14, 15 16, 18, 19, and half of 20; Plant Process Machine Work in buildings 11, 17, and 21; Knew Goods recycling and distribution in building 9; and RootLab steel and wood designers and fabricators in the other half of building 20.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pg. Richmond second 1; William B. Jones, To Survive and Excel: the Story of Southwestern University, 1840-2000. Georgetown, Texas: Southwestern University Press, 2006, pg. 401.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pg. 401.

<sup>54</sup> Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator. Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor. Accessed October 27, 2017 <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>

<sup>55</sup> "ACF To Make Valves In New Houston Plant," *Longview News-Journal*, April 29, 1954, pg. 6. Accessed via Newspapers.com.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pg. Richmond second 3.

<sup>57</sup> Presentation by ACF Industries, Incorporated to AMA (American Management Association) Conference on Acquisition of W-K-M. November 2, 1956, pgs. Furrer 10-11. ACF Archival Collection, Series 22, Box 1, Folder 1. St. Louis Mercantile Library. University of Missouri, St. Louis.

## Summary

The W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A for Commerce and Industry for its association with the establishment and growth of the W-K-M Company and their precedent-setting designs and manufacturing. W-K-M is recognized as an industry leader for both valve and the drilling equipment manufacturing, particularly for the oil industry. The W-K-M brand dominated the oil and gas industry for over thirty years as a separate company before its purchase by ACF Industries in 1954. However, even after its purchase, W-K-M's position as an industry leader for the valve industry as well as the drilling equipment industry caused the new owners to retain the W-K-M brand and products.<sup>58</sup> This trend has continued through 2017, where W-K-M is still a name brand of products sold by Cameron, a Schlumberger company.<sup>59</sup> The period of significance ranges from 1925 through 1957, which spans the years the company operated out of their facilities in east Houston.

Though not as widely recognized as consumer products, W-K-M valves at their heights, were an overwhelmingly popular brand of industrial products to use on oil and gas pipelines. Patented designs spurred innovation, and to date the company's designs serve as the basis for dozens of newer versions of W-K-M's original products. The company's designs for mechanical pipe coating application and improved rotary slips, and the precedents those patents set, create a valuable legacy for W-K-M. Furthermore, W-K-M invented and improved many machines and technologies, specifically their high-pressure gate valves, which ultimately became essential for oil and gas drilling companies. The district represents the W-K-M Company, and it serves as the location for the design and manufacturing of this industry-leading company.

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<sup>58</sup> Correspondence with Greg Johnson, President of United Valve and valve historian. Via Email, September 6, 2017.

<sup>59</sup> The line of W-K-M branded valves is available to view online. Accessed September 7, 2017 <http://cameron.slb.com/products-and-services/valves-index/wkm>

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W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas



Map 1: Harris County, Texas



Map 2: Google Earth aerial, accessed October 9, 2017.



Path: S:\Projects\41019 - WKM Company\MAPS\CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES\REPORT MAPS\WKM Company - NRHP Map.mxd

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**W-K-M COMPANY  
HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
PROPOSED NRHP MAP  
HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

- Contributing Location (Field ID)
- Non-Contributing Location (Field ID)
- Proposed National Register Historic District Boundary
- Building Footprint



Background:	Google Earth Imagery (2016)
Scale:	1:1,500
Created By:	JS
Approved By:	HCS
SWCA Project No.:	41019
Date Produced:	October 30, 2017
NAD 1983 StatePlane Texas South Central FIPS 4204 Feet	

Map 3: District boundary with contributing and non-contributing resources.

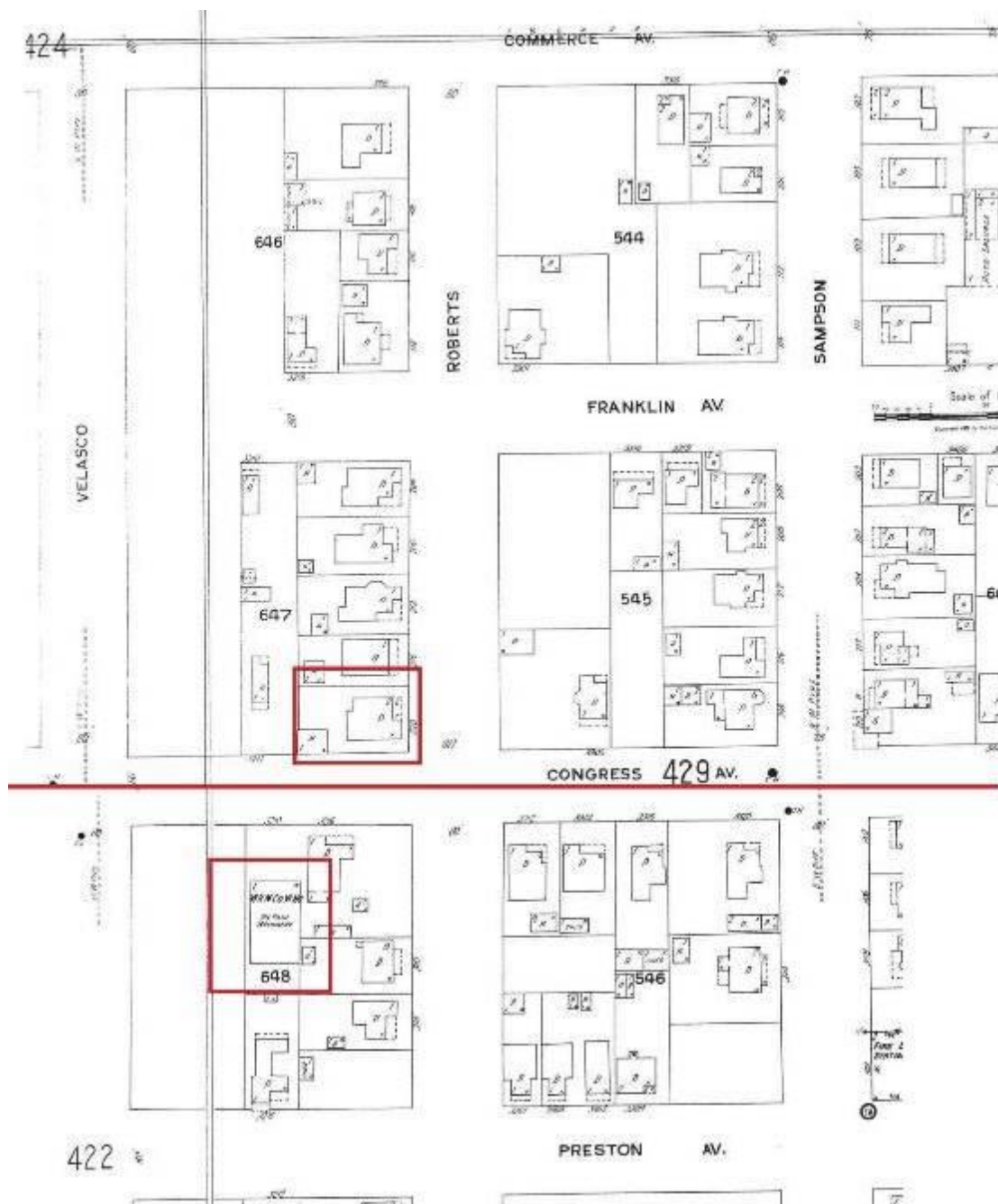


Figure 1: 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map, volume 4, sheets 425 and 429. These maps show the original 1919 warehouse (bottom) and the location of the first office building (top). The red line down the center marks where the two map sheets meet.

Figure 2a: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map, volume 4, sheets 425 and 429. This map shows the campus at its largest. Buildings are numbered #2-#21, #12 exclusive. Available at Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

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# SBR Draft

W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

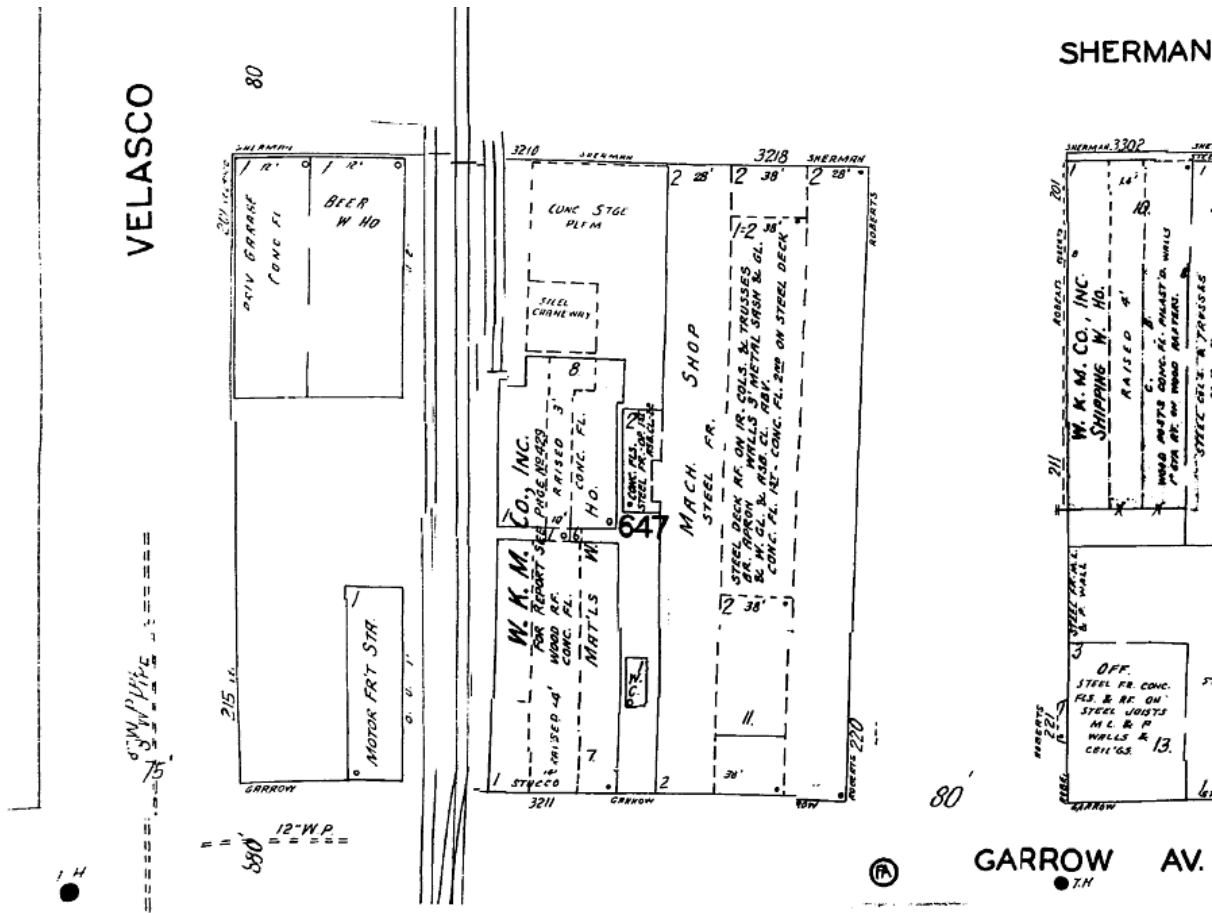


Figure 2c: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of block 647. This block features Buildings #7 and #8 (demolished) and #11. Access provided via ProQuest.

# SBR Draft

W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

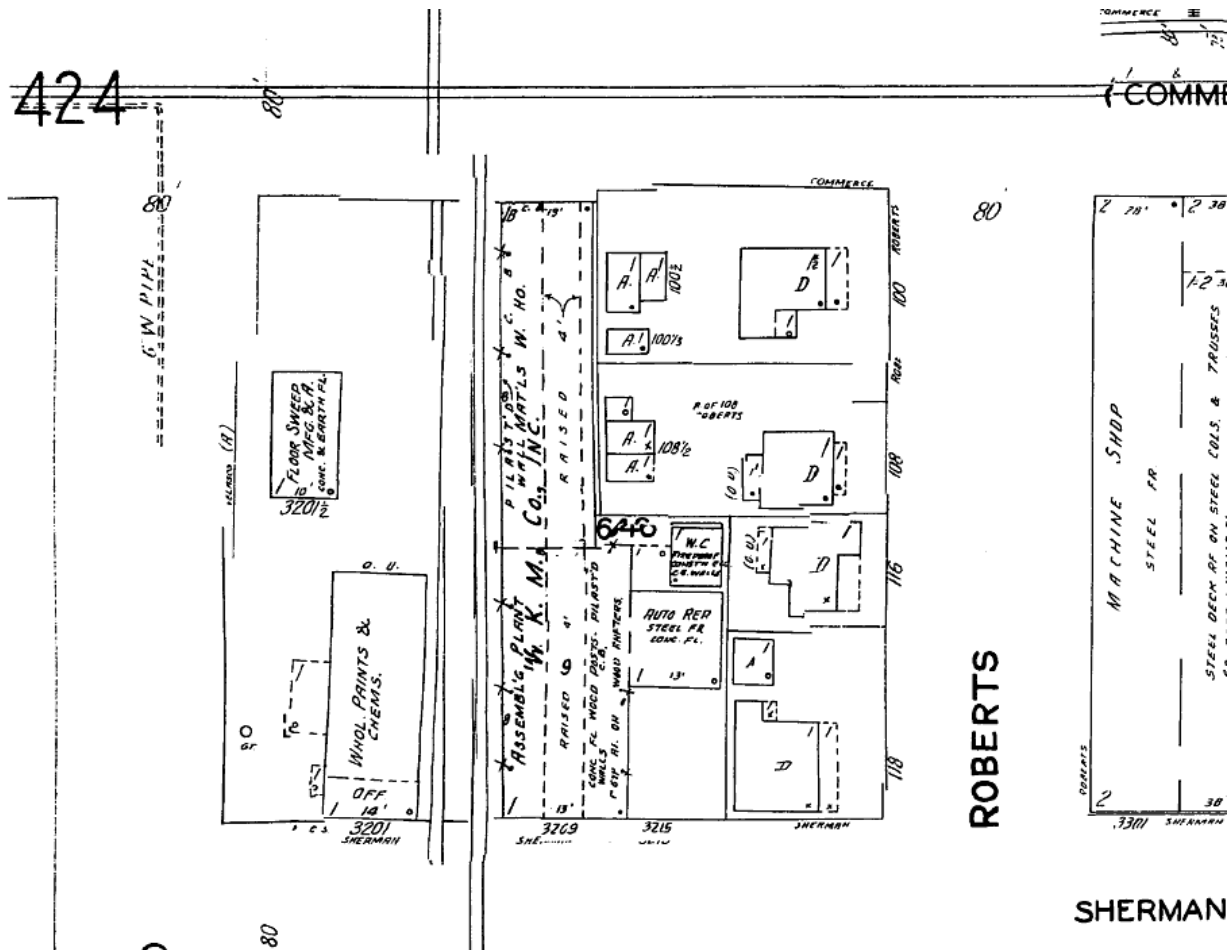


Figure 2d: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of block 646. This block features Building #9 and 3217 Sherman (NC). Access provided via ProQuest.

W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

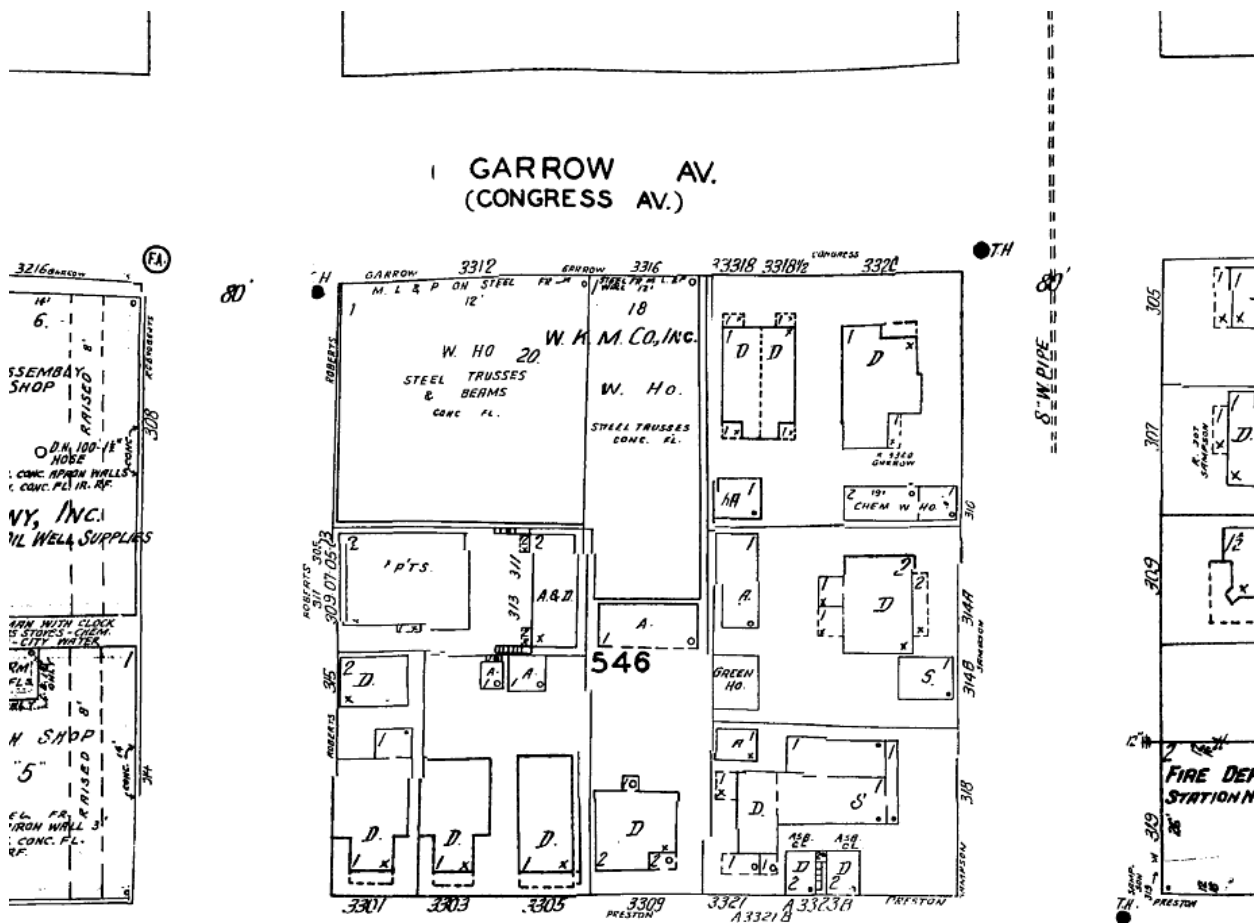


Figure 2e: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of block 546. This block features Buildings #20 and #18. Access provided via ProQuest.

W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

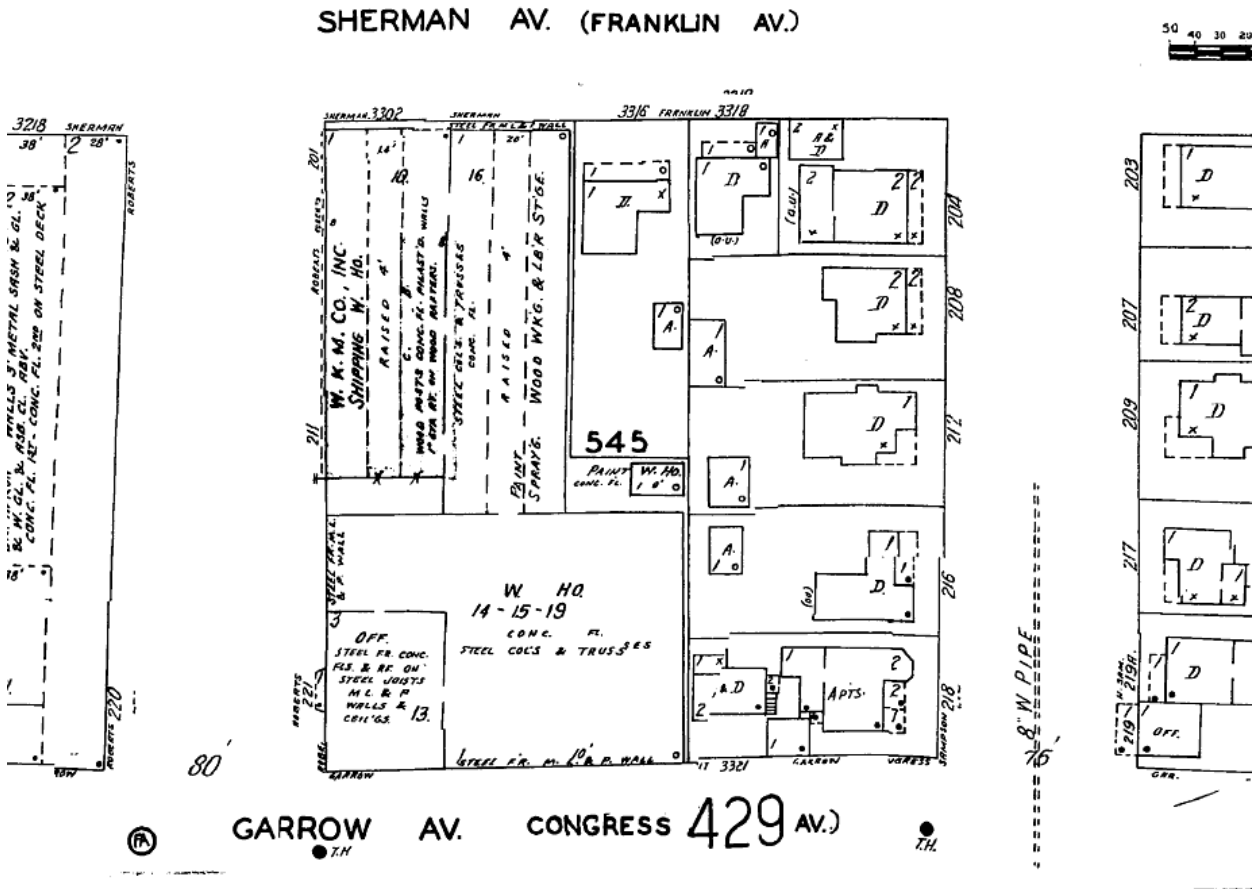


Figure 2f: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of block 545. This block features Buildings #10, #13, #14, #15, #16, and #19. Access provided via ProQuest.

# SBR Draft

W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

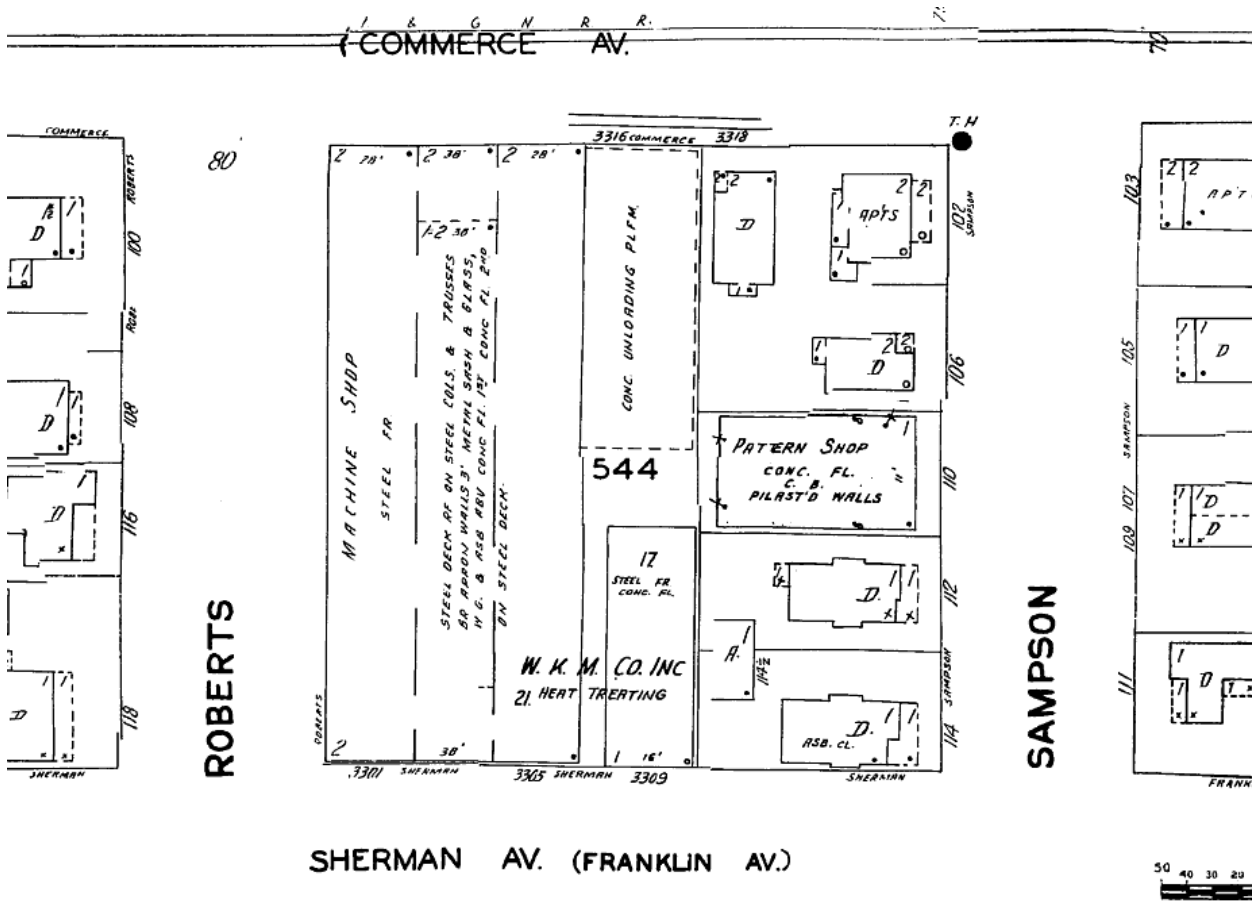


Figure 2g: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of block 544. This block features Buildings #17 and #21. Access provided via ProQuest.

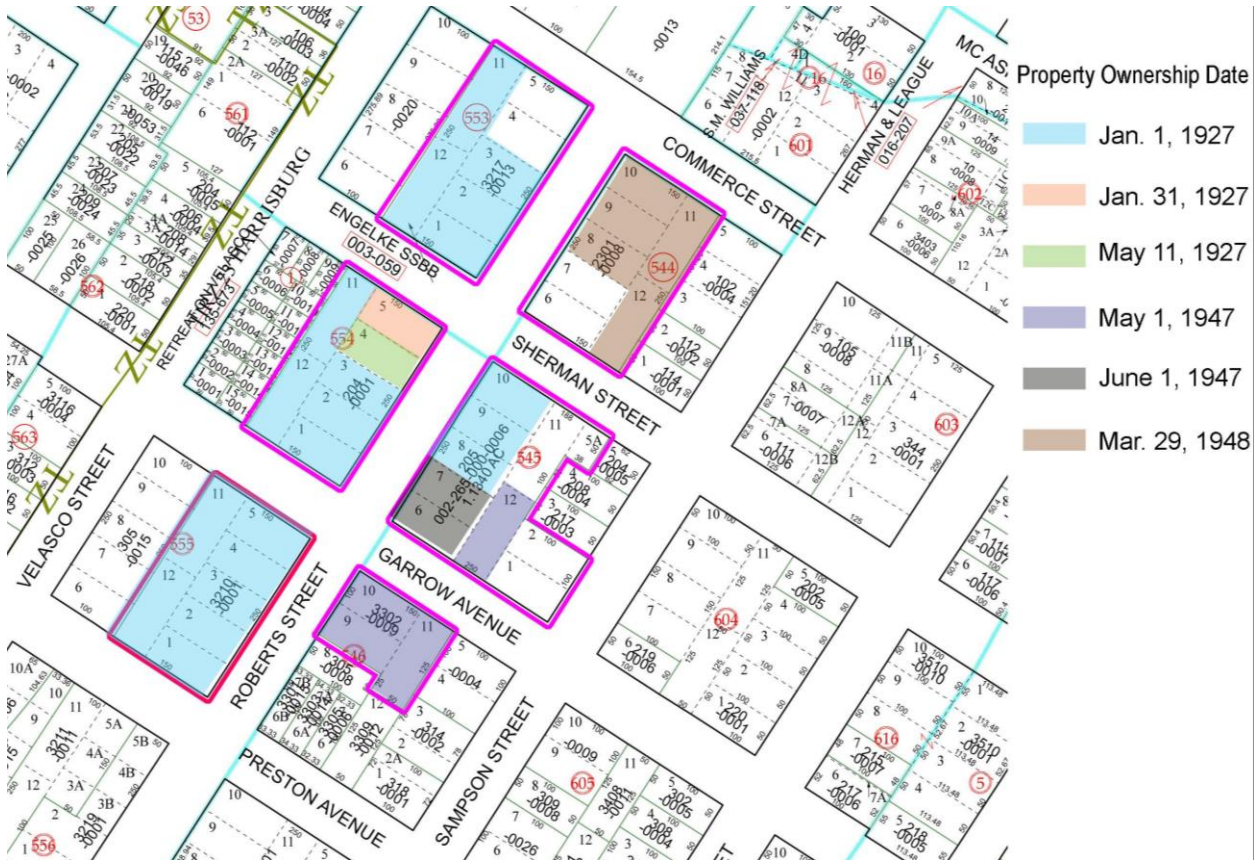


Figure 3 – Adapted 2016 Harris County Appraisal District facet map 5457D showing the evolution of W-K-M's campus based on information from the company's 1951 accounting records. Parcels outlined in purple and red all belong to the current property owners. Though Lots 6 and 7 on Block 544 are not mentioned in the accounting records, Building #21 does span those parcels and therefore were historically associated with the company. The remaining white parcels within the current ownership were historically not associated with W-K-M.



Figure 4: W-K-M's original office building at 220 Roberts, c. 1919. Courtesy University of Missouri, St. Louis – St. Louis Mercantile Library

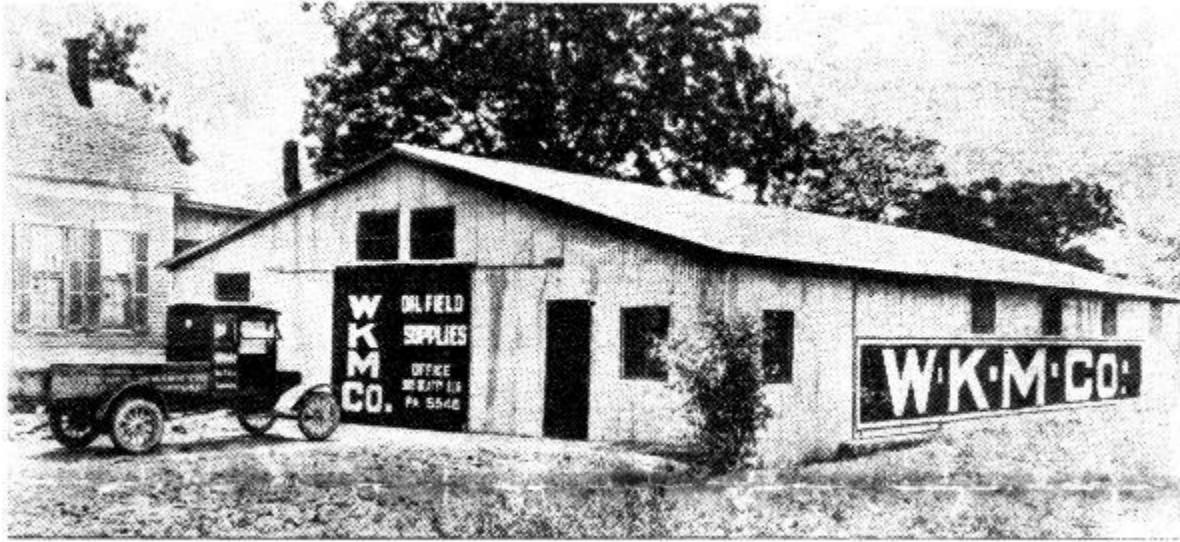


Figure 5: W-K-M's original warehouse and manufacturing building, c. 1919. Courtesy University of Missouri, St. Louis – St. Louis Mercantile Library

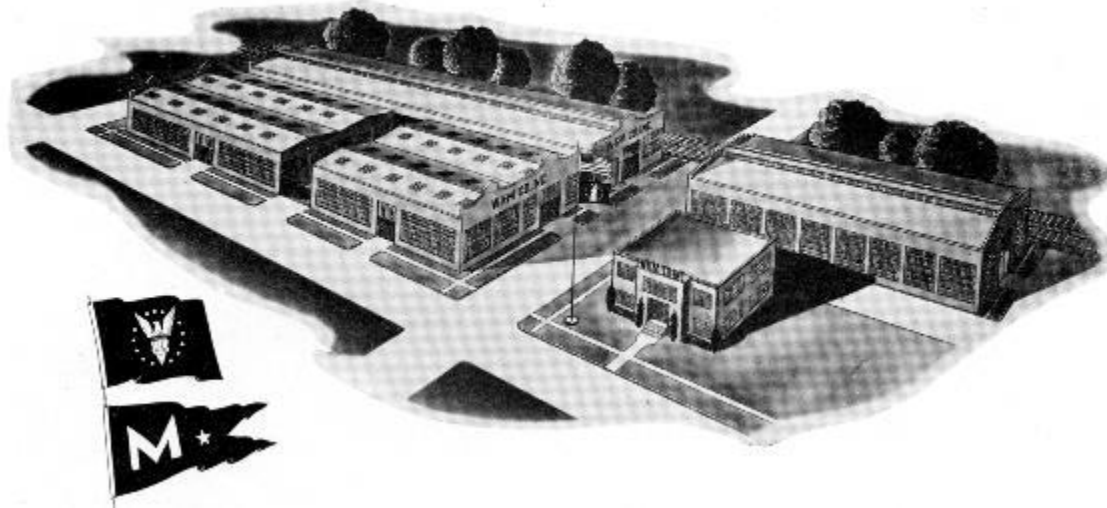


Figure 6: Rendering of the W-K-M Company, Inc. complex, c. 1945. The rendering shows Building #2-3-4 (rear, left), Building #5 (front, left), Building #6 (front, center), the original Office (front, right), and the now-demolished Building #7 (rear, right) Courtesy University of Missouri, St. Louis – St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 7: Photo of the then-new office building (#13), 1948. Courtesy University of Missouri, St. Louis – St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 8: Photo of Building #11 after construction, 1947. Courtesy University of Missouri, St. Louis – St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 9: Photo of Building #11 interior during manufacturing. Steel interior structure, concrete floor, brick and corrugated glass exterior visible, c. 1956. Courtesy University of Missouri, St. Louis – St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 10: Photo of Building #11 interior during the production of a gate valve. Steel interior structure, double-height manufacturing space, and clerestory windows visible, c. 1956.

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THE OIL WEEKLY

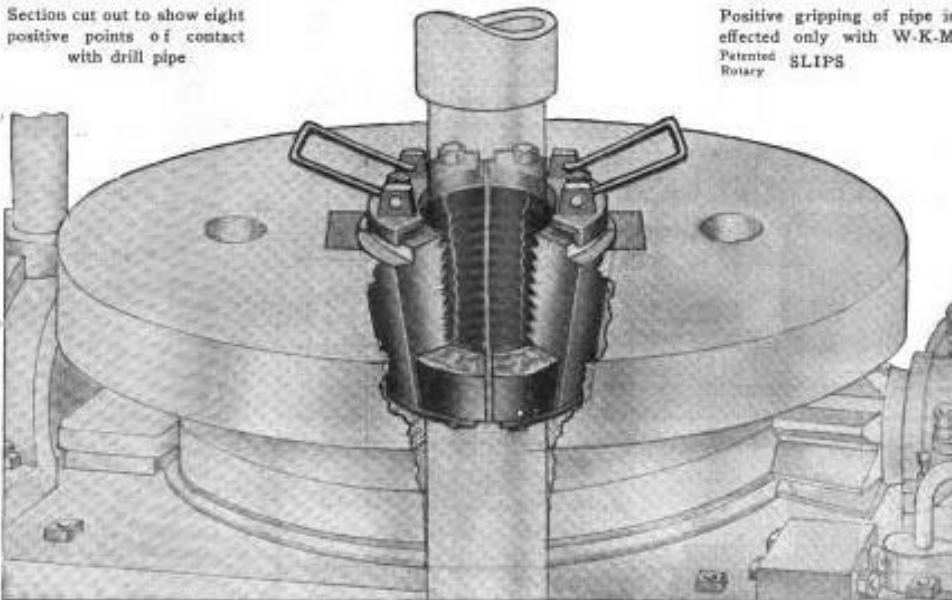
JULY 1, 1922

## THE WONDERFUL W-K-M Patented Rotary SLIP (REGISTERED TRADE NAME)

FULLY PATENTED—Any Infringements will be Vigorously Prosecuted

Section cut out to show eight  
positive points of contact  
with drill pipe

Positive gripping of pipe is  
effected only with W-K-M  
Patented Rotary SLIPS



SLIPS TO FIT EVERY ROTARY MADE

### W-K-M COMPANY

Sole Licensees—Under Livergood Patents

WEST BUILDING

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Figure 11 – 1922 advertisement in *The Oil Weekly* showing a cross section of a W-K-M rotary slip as inserted into a rotary.

## W-K-M COMPANY, Inc.

**W-K-M**

**HOUSTON, TEXAS**

### W-K-M ROTARY SLIPS

#### Type 35—Friction Slips



The latest advancement in rotary slips comes from the pioneer slip manufacturer in this improved design, thoroughly field tested and now protecting the longest pipe strings. Allows more gripping area, greater holding capacity, and a soft action. Takes hold or releases instantly, and will not slip, cut or bottleneck your pipe. Extreme light weight permits ease of handling. Highly flexible. Should wear occur on segments, they're readily replaced on the derrick floor, or redressed, at a nominal cost, making slips same as new. Long life assured by highest quality one-piece, drop-forged and heat-treated segments.

### W-K-M TUBING SLIPS



Series 12,000 feet, and the newest and latest Series 12,000, for depths to 12,000 feet.

Write for Pamphlet No. 320.



Deepwell Type



Regular Type

### W-K-M MUD SCREEN—SERIES 1100

The W-K-M Mud Screen employs a very simple means of operation; the flow of returns from the well under a pelton wheel rotates in turn the screening drum. This is not a whipping action, and consequently screen cloths last indefinitely.

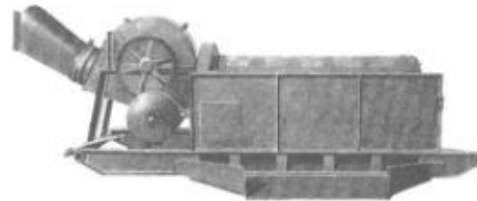
Operating expense is exactly nothing . . . maintenance cost is negligible due principally to the total absence of

turbines, motors or generators. Nor is there any destructive vibration to cause frequent shut-downs for repairs or screen cloth replacements.

Good clean samples of cuttings may be taken at any time, as they are thoroughly cleaned of mud before being discharged.

For extremely heavy going, a mud motor, connected to your mud pump, provides that extra power or accelerated rotation to discharge unusually heavy loads of shale, or to quickly clean out the screen.

All parts of the W-K-M Mud Screen are designed for ease of operation and long life. Frictionless bearings carry



all moving shafts and are fitted for Alemite lubrication. Driving gears run in a bath of oil.

All bearings are thoroughly sealed off against the entrance of mud or other foreign matter.

Final drive for drum is by a rigidly mounted, cut steel sprocket, meshing with a special high-grade roller chain, which lasts indefinitely.

Write for fully descriptive literature.

### W-K-M KING PIN BRAKE LINING

Designed particularly to dissipate the extreme heat generated in the brake flanges, and to avoid scoring or grooving of brake flanges, naturally increasing the life of both lining and flanges. The pins spaced throughout the lining not only conduct the heat away from the flanges, but provide a thin film over the braking surface, preventing scoring, and maintaining a constant friction. Pins are forced into the lining by special, patented machines, under terrific hydraulic pressure, where they are expanded after the manner of a rivet, and become an integral part of the lining. Prices of King Pin Lining are no higher than for ordinary lining.

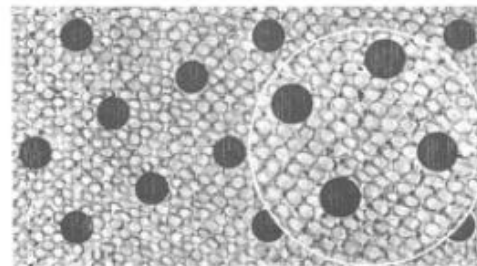


Figure 12 – Excerpts from W-K-M's 1939 sales catalog showing their rotary slips, tubing slips, and mud screens. Available in Shale Shakers and Drilling Fluid Systems: Techniques and Technology for Improving Solids Control Management by the American Association of Drilling Engineers. Page 26.

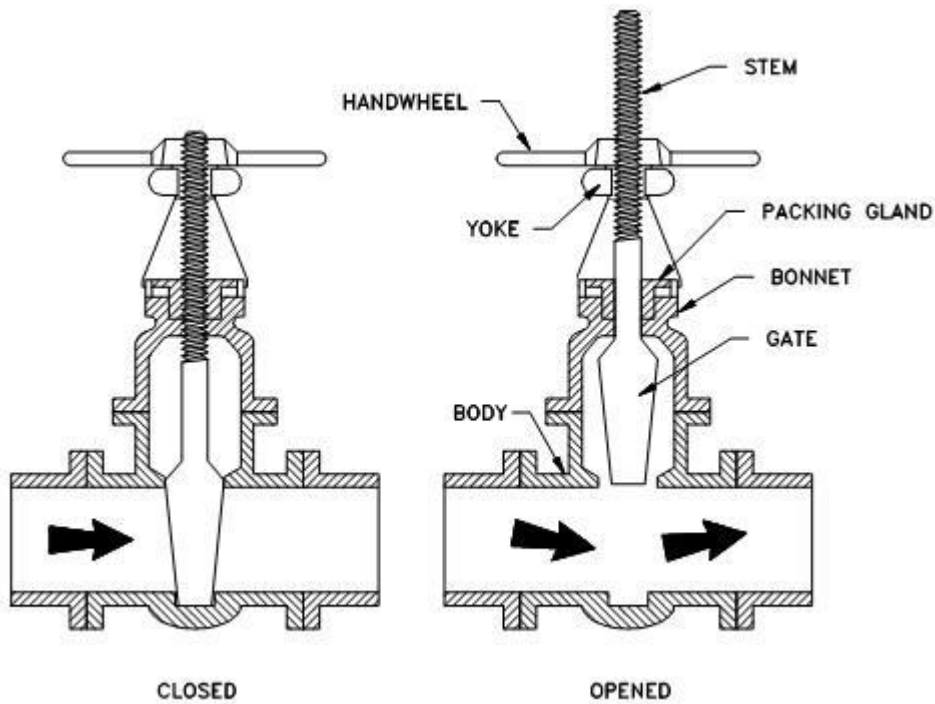


Figure 13 – Diagram of a gate valve in operation. W-K-M specialized in high-pressure gate valves like this one. Courtesy Marine Insight.

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W-K-M Company, Inc. Historic District, Houston, Harris County, Texas

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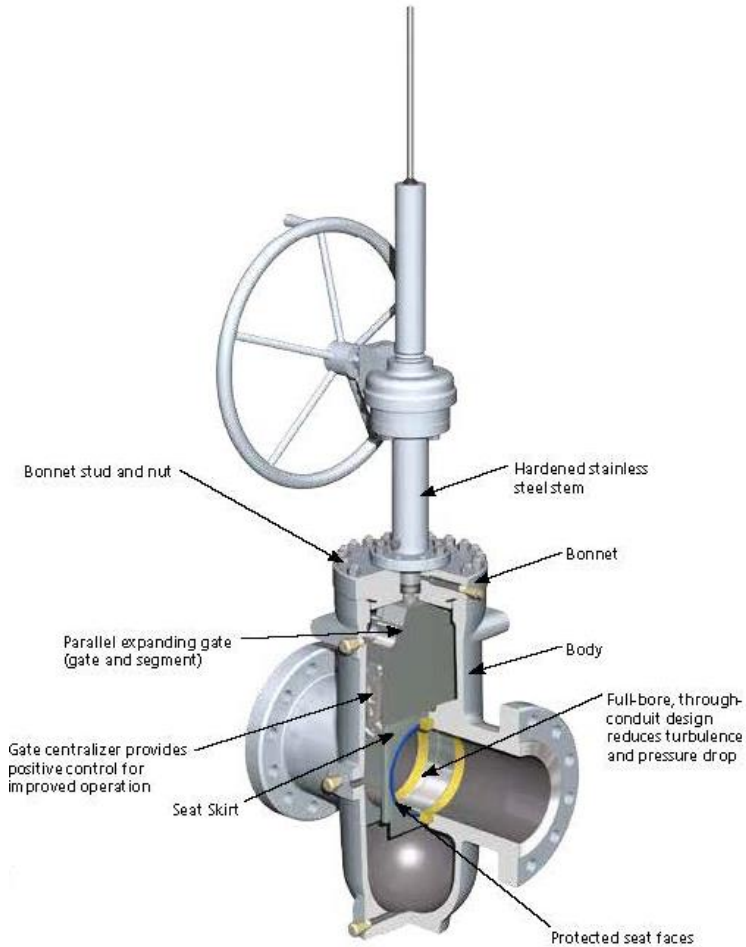


Figure 14 – Diagram of the current model of W-K-M Pow-R-Seal Gate Valve, as appearing in Cameron’s current product catalogues.



Photo 1 – Roberts Street, view north, September 2017. Building #11 is located on the west (left), while the east (right) side of the street has Buildings #13, #14, #10, and #21 running from the foreground to the background. This stretch of Roberts marks the center of W-K-M's original industrial complex.



Photo 2 – Sherman Street, view west from Roberts Street, September 2017. Building #11 is on the south side of the street (left), and Non-Contributing Resource at 3217 Sherman and W-K-M Building #9 are both on the north (right) side of the street.

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Photo 3 – The south (rear) elevation of Buildings #2, #3, and #4 is featured on the left as a one story building. The south (rear) and east elevations of Buildings #5 and #6 are on the right with their second floors emerging along the centerlines. These buildings, with photo facing northwest, were used for offices, the machine shop, and assembly for the complex. February 2017.



Photo 4 – North (front) façade of Building #2, #3, and #4. This photo demonstrates the typical alterations performed on buildings within the historic district: window infill, new doors, and the covering or removal of original W-K-M signage.

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Photo 5 – East elevation of Building #2-3-4 under the connection to Buildings #5 and #6, view southwest. The original metal windows and glazing remain in place beneath the connection. There are no doors between Building #2-3-4 and Buildings #5 and #6. This is typical of W-K-M additions and alterations with original features remaining in place.



Photo 6 – Building #6, interior view southeast, June 2017. The original metal framing and windows are still present.



Photo 7 – Building #9 (left) and 3217 Sherman (right), south (front) and east elevations, view northwest. Building #9 was used as an assembly plant. 3217 Sherman is the only resource recommended as Non-Contributing to the district because it underwent substantial alteration outside the period of significance.



Photo 8 –Building #9, north (rear) and west elevations, view southeast in February 2017. This building narrows as it approaches this end of the block, reflecting the constraints from W-K-M's property ownership.

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Photo 9 – Building #9, interior view south. The building retains its original interior metal framing, clerestory windows, and ceiling.



Photo 10 –Building #10, north and west elevations, view southeast with Building #13 in background on right and Building #16 partially visible at the left. Building #10 was used as a shipping warehouse.

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Photo 11 – Detail of remaining W-K-M signage on the north elevation of Building #10, view southeast.

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Photo 12 – Building #10, view north. The original metal frame and clerestory windows remain, though new interior walls have been constructed to create offices.

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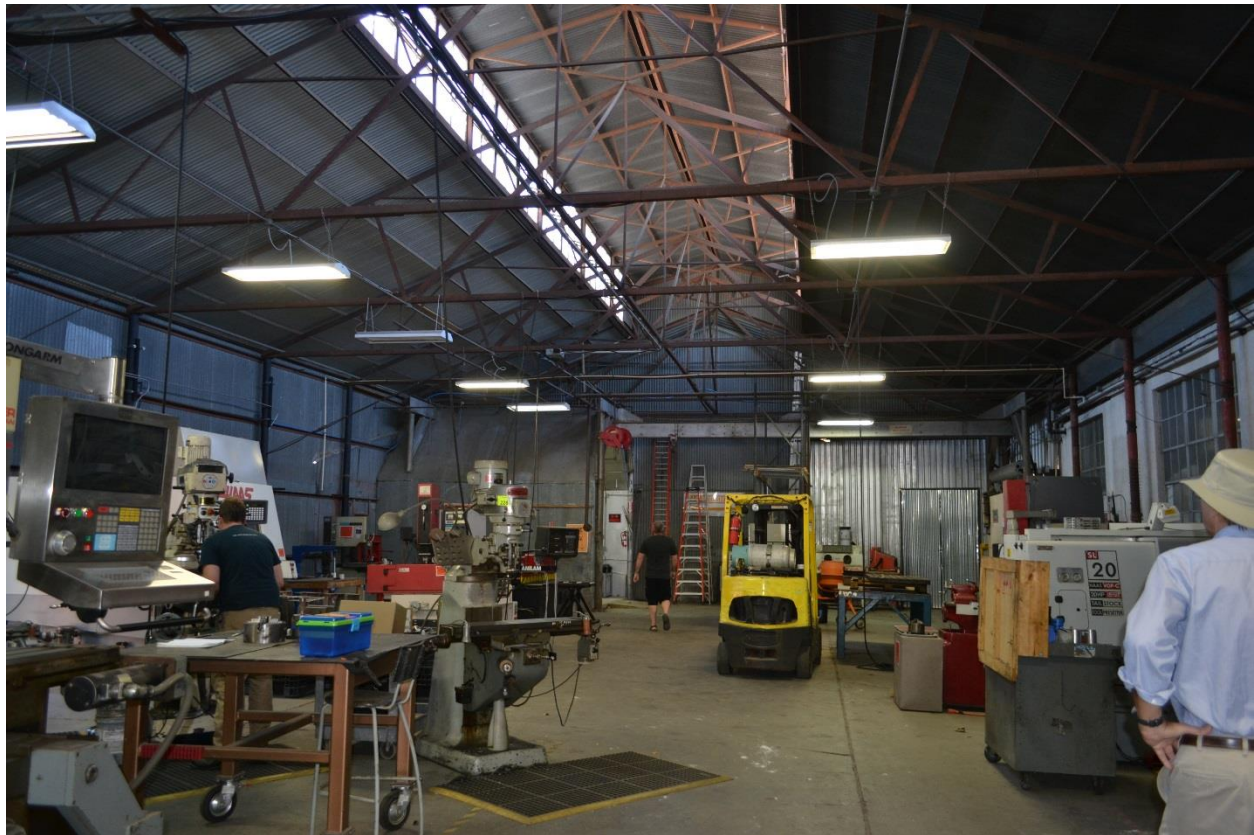


Photo 13 – Building #16 interior, view south. This building was constructed adjacent to Building #10 within two years. However, the buildings remain structurally independent. The metal casement windows on Building #10's east elevation remain in place and visible on the right.



Photo 14 –Building #11, south (rear) and east elevations, view northwest. Building #11 was a machine and assembly shop for the site, and the double-height interior allowed them to assemble large products much more easily.

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Photo 15 – Building #11, interior view north from second floor. Building #11 remains most of its original features, including the corrugated wire glass curtain wall, steel framing, and its two-story height with clerestory windows. All of the original manufacturing equipment has been removed.

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Photo 16 –Building #13 (left), west (front) and south elevations, view northeast. This was the main office building for the company for their last years at this site. The south elevations for Buildings #15 and #19 are visible on the right where they appear as additions to Building #13. Buildings #15 and #19 were both constructed independently of Building #13 and of each other; they are both, in fact, separate buildings.



Photo 17 – Interior of Building #13, view east towards the first floor lobby. The interior of Building #13 retains many of its finishes, including original wood paneling.



Photo 18 – Interior of Building #13, second floor conference room, view south. The room retains its original acoustical tile ceiling, fireplace, and wood paneling.

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Photo 19 – Covered space between Building #13 (left) and Building #14 (right), taken from inside Building #15, view west. Though it abuts Building #13, the structure for Building #15 is independent from Building #13. There are additionally no original interior connections between Buildings #14, #15, and #19.

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Photo 20 – Building #19, view south. The shared party wall between Building #19 and Building #15 is visible on the right. Though the Sanborn maps show Buildings #14, #15, and #19 as a single building, the party wall prevents shared functionality of the warehouse buildings, and combined with the different construction years, indicates the three buildings are separate entities.



Photo 21 – Building #17, south (front) elevation, view north. Building #17 was used as a heat treatment building.



Photo 22 – Building #17 interior view north. The building retains its original cladding, framing, and some light fixtures. However, no equipment remains in place in this building.



Photo 23 –Building #18 north elevation (far left) and Building #20, north and west elevations, view southeast. Buildings #18 and 20 were used as warehouses. Constructed only a few months apart, the continuation of the parapet creates the illusion that these two buildings are a single entity. However, the buildings were constructed to be structurally independent and have varying dimensions to accommodate property boundaries.

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Photo 24 – Building #18 interior view north. Building #18's structural independence from Building #20 is visible on the left where the original wall separating the two buildings remains in place. Each building has its own interior columns to support the roof.



Photo 25 –Building #21, north (rear) and west elevations, view southeast. This building was used as a machine shop, and it was the last building constructed on site with a construction date of 1949.

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Photo 26 – Building #21 interior, view northeast from second floor. The original corrugated wire glass curtain wall, steel framing, and concrete flooring are all visible. No original industrial equipment remains.